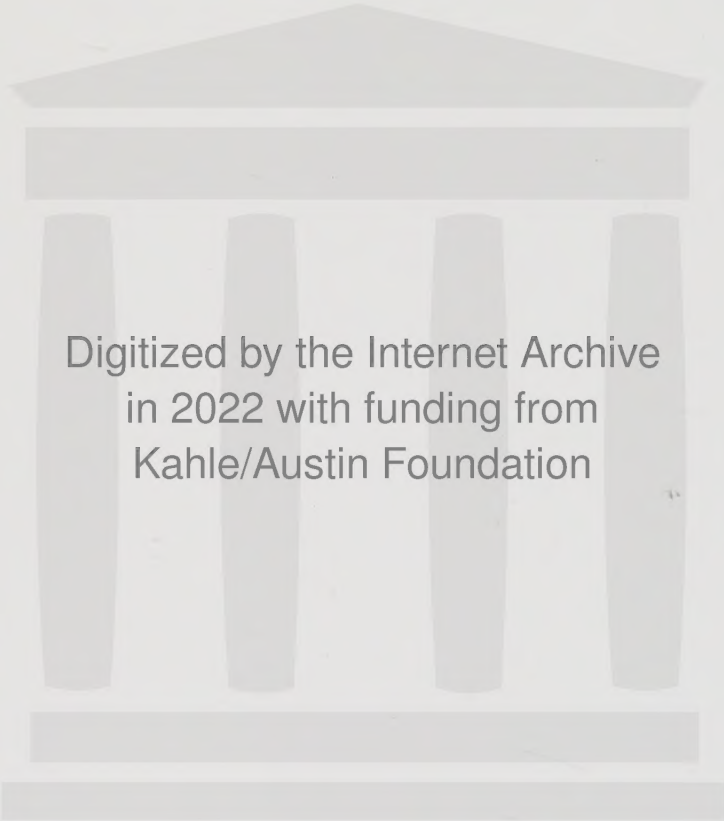


Sermons Delivered
By Elias Hicks And
Edward Hicks:
In Friends Meetings,
New York, In Fifth
Month, 1825
(1825)



Elias Hicks
Edward Hicks



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Elias Hicks

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NOTE.

A few words of explanation may be due from the stenographer to the public. He is aware that the ensuing discourses are neither completely full nor perfect; but he is conscious that they have been reported with a faithful regard to the sentiments of the speakers, and he believes they will be found to contain no material errors. It is at all times difficult, not to say impossible, for the most expert stenographer to take the whole that a rapid speaker may pronounce in the course of a sermon. Some aid is usually derived from the memory, which has been less available to the reporter in the present case, from his entire unacquaintance with the speakers, or with their opinions, manner, or particular habits in delivery. These embarrassments have also been increased by the inconveniency of writing without a table, and by the difficulty of hearing in a crowded gallery. On the whole however it is believed, they will be found to contain the spirit and substance of the sermons they profess to transmit, and carry with them in a great measure the manner and language in which they were delivered.

From a desire to express in as complete a manner as possible, the words and text of the speaker. He has thought best to make no grammatical corrections of their peculiarities of Phraseology; but to exhibit them as nearly as possible to the Public in their own particular manner.

L. H. CLARKE.

M. T. C. GOULD, the reporter of the two last sermons, though subject to many of the inconveniences enumerated by his friend and Colleague, is not conscious of having made any material omission, even in the language of the speaker. This may be attributed, in part, to a more intimate acquaintance with the style of ELIAS HICKS, having lately reported a volume of his sermons delivered in the city and vicinity of PHILADELPHIA. For the errors which may be discovered, his apology will be found, in the language of L. H. CLARKE.

SERMON I.

DELIVERED BY ELIAS HICKS, IN FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, ROSE-STREET, NEW-YORK, ON FIRST DAY MORNING, THE 8TH OF FIFTH MONTH, 1825.

SINCE I have been sitting with you, I have been led to consider, not only from the records of history in past ages, but from our own observations and experience at the present day that it has been the practice of the children of men at all times, when an individual has been led to address a community, society, or nation, on any subject, moral or religious, to address them as a single person, as though all were in the same situation or predicament, in relation to the subject, to be commented upon. This is discoverable in the case of Elijah the prophet formerly. Driven, as it were from pillar to post, by Ahab, and Jezebel, being cast down and almost discouraged, he went off to save his life, and retired into the wilderness, on account of the transgressions of the people. In this state of sequestration from mankind, he was addressed by his Almighty friend, on this wise, What dost thou here Elijah? To this the pro-

phet returned an answer according to his views and feelings, that the people had become cruel, and had deviated from the path of rectitude ; inasmuch as they had slain all the Lord's prophets, and sought his life also ! he said, " the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I only am left ; and they seek my life to take it away." Yet the Lord declared to him, that it was not exactly so ; for, said he, " I have yet left me seven thousand, in Israel," even seven thousand " who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

In another case this form of address has prevailed, in which the Lord spoke to his prophet Jeremiah, and said, " My people have committed two evils : they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Here the queries seem to arise in my mind, how far it is proper to consider all as the servants of God, who profess to be subject to the same discipline. We have all too much forsaken the Lord. We have turned from him and hewed out cisterns of our own, adapted to our own convenience and vain imaginations. We have contrived ways and means to get along without applying to him ; and yet, in his will only is contained his law and his

covenant. To the Israelites was given an *outward* law and covenant, for they were an *outward* people. In their degenerate state, the Divine Mind was anxious to give them such law, and such rules for their government as they could bear. And so long as they kept strictly to the law and the covenant, there was no diversity of opinion among them; all their prophets were attended to. This outward covenant and plan of government was suited to their animal natures and sensual desires. This covenant had its seal, in outward miracles, wrought in their presence, which must have been an evidence to them of its having proceeded from Almighty power. This was the highest evidence they looked for, and was suited to their low views and outward dispensation. But outward miracles are no evidence to an internal spiritual covenant. God now acts upon the hearts of men without them. Were they necessary for the furtherance of his purposes, they would be continued. But they would defeat the design of the new dispensation, if they were now to be renewed; for they are not suited to the new and present covenant and law. You have read in the prophet Jeremiah, that the Lord would make a new covenant with *his people*. But the promise was confined to his people only; it was not new to

any other nation on the earth; nor is it to be found in history, that he gave an outward covenant to any other nation whatsoever. But it is not to be supposed because they were not included in the assurance of the Jewish covenant, that other nations were out of the notice of God; but their case was different, it was not suited to them, nor to their condition; God is an impartial being, and hence he would bestow upon them such a course of improvement and direction as should best suit their wants and situations. The old covenant was not to be admitted to any other nation than the Jews; but the new covenant was to be an everlasting covenant. It was not made liable in any wise to change, on his part; for it was to be perpetual, and as such cannot alter; for God cannot change, he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And although the people turned away from him, and sought out their own devices, yet God followed them in their lean and lost condition; for God is love, and he would not forsake what he had created. If they had attended to their duty, they would have sought to return to their first love, and to perform the will of their Creator. At the present day all that is required of us, is to do the manifested will of God our Creator. How then is that will manifested to us? It may be

observed that the first manifestation of it is, the evidence of the spirituality of the covenant. God is a Spirit, and therefore his covenant must be internal and spiritual, and not external. This was the covenant which he gave to man in the beginning, and through this we may see what is our own condition, as well as what we mean by the term salvation. It is salvation *from* our sins, not *in* our sins, and from our own self-will and designing. As all things come from his spirit, it is manifest that we should never have a will of our own, independent of his. How presumptuous is it, then, in us to set up our will in contradiction to his, and as it were to dictate to the Almighty! Where the covenant which I have spoken of exists, what is the seal of it? Is it outward miracles? Not at all. It is superior to all external manifestations. It is as high above them, as the heavens are above the earth,—as spirit is above matter. It is written in our hearts; and if we are only faithful to the law of the covenant thus written, we shall be satisfied of it, and become the offspring of God, not only by creation, but by the begettings of his Holy Spirit in our souls. God has no children but spiritual ones. But the people have not been obedient to the known will of God. They have chosen to follow their own devices, and

christendom has been employed in hewing out their own broken cisterns. We must therefore go back to the spiritual covenant—to the internal light which has been given us. Has the medium through which God spoke to his apostles ceased? By no means. Is he no longer that merciful and propitious being as formerly, when he condescended to have immediate intercourse with his creatures? His communication with them is now by the same inward light that ever it was, and not by outward miracles. But because these latter have ceased, dare you say or believe that the Almighty Being has forsaken you? It would be a heinous crime, and not to be committed without shame and confusion of face. What is it, then, that now separates us from God? The gospel tells us that it is nothing but our sins. But “is the Lord’s arm shortened that he cannot save?—is his ear heavy that he cannot hear?” No, it is your iniquities that have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear; and I appeal to you all to say if this is not true by the evidence within.

Our evidence is internal, from the communications of God himself. Nothing can convict me of sin but the evidence in my own heart.

From this evidence there is no escape. Where can any one hide from the Almighty, or flee from that testimony which bears inward witness against him? All the good men and good women of the present day, can declare how much these truths are confirmed by their own experience. As the light shines upon us we feel the power of conviction, and are guided in our path. We have dangers, however, to encounter in every step of our progress. Such creatures we are that we are led to embrace sin from habit. At first it is committed, perhaps, with reluctance. It becomes by degrees more flattering; darkness is brought over our understandings, and it is finally adopted with eagerness. After having indulged it for a time, the mind by continued custom and use gets easy, and the conscience quiet. So we see it is that christendom has commuted for her sins, and the religion of virtue is exchanged for forms and ceremonies, and the men and women in it undertake to make a heaven of their own. But these attempts are in vain. All our false rests will be disappointed—all our false heavens will be shaken—they will be swept and dissolved away.

Some men's sins go beforehand to judgment, and some follow after. It seems as if at the present day there was a gathering for the coming

calamity. Look around upon the people, and all appears to be prosperous; there is great comfort and plenty for the body, but not for the soul. We have commuted away virtue for a kind of religion which is no religion at all, and it is only God Almighty, who by his power can save us from these sins. It is only by his powerful light, shown to me and shown to you, that we can discover wherein we have done amiss. Nothing is required of the creature, but to surrender himself to the power of the Lord. This is the day in which sinners in Zion should be afraid; and it will be a good day when they shall come trembling under a sense of their transgressions, and be led to an entire submission to the will of God. Repentance is the gift of God, for it is brought about by the will of God. And how happy would they be, if they would be attentive and see this dispensation implanted in their minds so as to become willing to submit to the dispensations of the Lord. That dispensation is a writing, but not written with pen and ink, nor engraved on stone. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; and the best of men and women can go no farther than to recommend the observance of his commands, and to gather home the mind to the first cause. As we come to it we should understand the

language of Jesus, that the kingdom of God cometh not with outward observation, but is within us, and also his declaration to his disciples, that it was necessary for him to go away; for, says he, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but "if I go away I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive; because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Tarry at Jerusalem, was the command, until ye receive power from on high. And what is Jerusalem? A quiet habitation. And how was this power to be received? Not from books or science, but from the direct communications of God. All the books in the world could not have taught it; it is superior to them all, and thus also must we sink down, until his Holy Spirit shall see fit to raise us up, and put the words of comfort in our mouth. *Ye shall receive power*, was the promise, and every where, where the divine command has influence, it drives away all other rests. Nothing was promised to their own premeditation, but as the divine power should come upon them. How easy it is to see that it must be so, if we get the right instructor. There are no two persons alike in

all this large assembly; but in the silent operation of the Spirit, each individual experiences such gifts as are appropriate to his state and condition. And hence it is that we are called his brethren, because we become partakers of, and born of the same Spirit, and as new born children led to the head and precious top stone, Christ. As the blood flows in little streams and circulates over every part of the body, so in like manner is the operation of the Spirit on the soul. It is on this rock, the rock of Revelation, he declares he will build his church, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Yet if we judge by their fruits, how small a number is there of Christendom, who are real Christians, and walk by the inward light! When light should prevail, how rarely do we discover a love that is stronger than death! This love it was, that led Jesus to give up his life for the sins of the world. He felt the trial of it, and the principle is as strong now as it was then. But as in the days of Elijah, so now we trust there is a little remnant, even seven thousand in Israel, whose knees have not bowed down to Baal, but are ready to surrender up their own will to their Heavenly Father. This spirit it was which animated Jesus when he gave his life for the sins of the world. Mark his agony in the garden

when he prayed to his Heavenly Father that if it were possible this cup should pass from him. But it was not possible—not possible, I mean, as consistent with the great design; for if it had passed from him, it would have defeated the object of his coming. Then we should have been carried back to the old law, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, instead of the new dispensation in which we are taught, if one smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also. These sufferings can be borne, and every true child of God has to go through them now in a measure as formerly. It is true, when the power of man rises over us, as in the times of war, the trial is very great. I have felt it in my own experience; but it can be endured, for there was a power above which secured me, and will secure all who are steadfastly guided by the true light. He who undertakes to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, says Christ, shall find it. Then we come into a condition, in which will be fulfilled the words of the prophecy, that the swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks; and we must come to this before we can be formed after the pattern of Jesus Christ. And what a blessed state of the world would this produce! The little number would leaven a whole

nation, and unite the whole world in the same forgiving and forbearing disposition. How rejoiced should we be to see our fellow-creatures employed in acts of benevolence, leading on and performing the same great parts of harmony and love. This is the wisdom of God. All the cunning artifices of men are foolishness when compared with it. Under its influence the remnant may sit down in Eden and Salem in repose. But it is not the righteousness of another that can save us. It must be done by the individual himself, or he cannot be the elect of the Lord; for he is of the elect who elects God. Jesus elected his heavenly Father as his rule and guide. So also must we, and he must be made our light, and love, and life. This, and this alone, will be sufficient to bring us all into the same line of life, and enable us to obtain dominion over thrones, and principalities, and powers. It is evidence that we are Christians, when we are directed, not by our own wills, but yield to the will of God—when we cast off the pride and honours of the world. I would not be a president, king, or counsellor; for no such distinctions are made by the Spirit. Yet many may be saved who do not come to the fulness of the light. If they are sincere in their repentance, God may pardon their inconsistencies and er-

rors, even in the last hour of life. I conceive that to be a president, king, or emperor, is unworthy, and that such an one cannot be a true Christian, for he cannot bear the cross of Christ. And how often do those who pride themselves in these honours, when called to render an account of their stewardship, resemble the wicked servant who was brought unto his master, owing him ten thousand talents, for which his wife and children were ordered to be sold. What did the lord of that servant do? He forgave him the debt; in like manner our Heavenly Father may forgive the sins of a president who obtains his place to receive the honour of men. Here is a great lesson for our instruction, and shows that forgiveness may be extended to the bed of sickness. But when set at liberty, what did the unjust servant do? He turned back to the same state of selfish nature, and having found a fellow servant who owed him a hundred pence, he seized him by the throat and cast him into prison. So mortals, after they have been delivered from sickness, and impressed with the importance of keeping covenant with God, often turn round like the wicked and ungrateful servant, and forget what they owe to their divine benefactor. It is our sins and iniquities only, that separate us from him. These

must be repented of in the present state, for there is no repentance in the grave. There is nothing so hard for the creature to give up as the will, but it must be done. There is no salvation in it, and it must be given up. Place no dependance on any thing external ; but sit down in humble prostration at the footstool of Almighty God. Then you may rise purified and encouraged by the internal evidence of the goodness of our Heavenly Father. Every one who disobey, will be deprived of that light. In the new dispensation, the gospel is preached by the power and wisdom of God, working in the immortal soul, to the building up of Christ in us, the hope of glory. This every true Christian will feel from his own experience, being supported by that inward evidence that never faileth.

But let it not be understood from what I have said, that it will do to put off repentance to the bed of death. Although the thief on the Cross was accepted through repentance ; and although the master was reconciled to his wicked servant, by his submission ; yet far be it from me to encourage men or women to sin, on the hopes of the mercy of God at the final hour. Do not pacify the poor soul by the idea that God will be merciful, and that you are therefore safe in

doing wrong. We are in a different state from cases of the thief and the servant. We sin with light and knowledge, and it is by the grace of God only, that we are, or can be saved. The scriptures teach us to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godlily in the present world; and nothing less than this, my friends, can make us safe.

Much has been said of the falling away that has occurred; but we are informed that it was necessary that this should first happen; that the man of sin and son of perdition should be revealed, who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, and taking the seat of God in the heart; arraying himself as an angel of light, would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect; but this is impossible; for who are the elect? those only who elect God for their portion, and those he will not permit to be deceived. It is not all that have the religion of virtue, who claim to be religious. There are many hypocrites in the earth. What else can we call

those Presidents and Clergy, who, for office and vanity, and to be seen of men, profess in their frolics and assemblies, even pretending to open them by a prayer to advance the work of the Lord. It is evident, to every man of observation, that this is no part of religion. It is as far from the kingdom of Heaven as Antichrist.

SERMON II.

DELIVERED BY ELIAS HICKS IN FRIEND'S MEETING
HOUSE, HESTER-STREET, NEW-YORK; FIRST DAY AF-
TERNOON, THE 8TH OF FIFTH MONTH, 1825.

WHILST sitting in this meeting, the tendency of the declaration of Jesus to his followers has been strongly brought to my mind, wherein he certified to them that without him they could do nothing. It brought to my remembrance likewise, what he said concerning the Comforter, whom he declared his Father would send, and who should abide with them for ever. He had said to them a great many things which they had not realized, and which consequently had been of no use to them. Nor could they be useful unto them, until brought to their recollection by his spiritual operation; for which whilst with them, outwardly they could look no higher. To believe in him in his outward manifestation, was the highest ascent of their minds. Hence, there were many things which they could not comprehend until the veil of his body was re-

moved. They could not understand the gospel until that event took place; for they were under the law and limited to that manifestation. But many things were important for them to understand, when the period of his sojourning on earth was accomplished.

I need not rehearse what this assembly has undoubtedly read and understood—that it was necessary that he should go away, in order to remove the veil, and to enable the people to behold the light of the Son of God, the Comforter. But who was this Comforter, my friends? It was not an outward and external one, but an inward and spiritual revelation to the soul. Under the old dispensation the Lord visited his people, saved them from sickness, and enabled them to see and enjoy the promised land. This was outward, and typical of what was to come. But under the gospel dispensation it all relates to the soul, and there is no *matter* about it. The Comforter is altogether spiritual, and it was promised that when he came he should open and reveal to them those things which had not been made manifest. A mystery is like a nonentity until it is revealed, and therefore a revelation was necessary. Secret things belong unto God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us and our children forever; and this brought to

my mind what Jesus said on this subject; as laying the foundation of the little which I would say to this large assembly, and as showing the object and reward of what I wished to recommend to them, which is a life of righteousness.

Righteousness is necessary to religion, for religion without righteousness is nothing, and worse than nothing. Religion and righteousness are really the same thing, and how beautifully is this shown to us, in Christ's sermon on the mount! It makes the way easy and plain, and none, unless wilfully, not even the way-faring man, though a fool, can err therein. The real doctrines of the gospel are very unpleasant to the children of men, whilst in their natural state. They can perceive no beauty nor comeliness in them; but the soul that really delights in God, is also delighted with his gospel. He is ready to give up his own will to the will of God, and rejoices in a life of righteousness. It is such, and such only, as these, whom he chooses to anoint with the oil of gladness above their fellows. What was the answer when the question was put concerning the first and great commandment? It was to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The Almighty was to have no competitor in the heart; but

this exclusive love to God is never known to a selfish mind.

The next commandment is to love our neighbour as ourselves. How plain and clear is this!—and who can but love it, that delights in righteousness! It is a hard saying to those that disbelieve. But self must be crucified and slain. All which becomes an idol is to be given up to the moles and the bats; and all who prefer themselves to others, must subject their wills to the will of the Lord. But look over the professing Christian world. Where is the possessor of righteousness? And how prevailing is selfishness! Under the influence of selfishness we cannot comply with the commands of God. By rejecting it we are brought into a condition not to prefer ourselves; and this is the true charity that the apostle speaks of. The charity of the gospel teaches us not to build up ourselves on the ruins of others, or to prefer our own good to theirs. This is the peculiar property of that charity which “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things”—of that charity which never faileth, and which brings the soul into communion with God Almighty. It introduces it into the band of pure love, from which nothing can separate it, “neither life, nor death, nor angels,

nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature." Neither shall we be separated from Christ if we comply with his commands. His will was in conformity with the will of his Heavenly Father, and bound up in the same bundle of life and light. He was made Son of Man that he might be made Son of God. The children of men wanted a perfect example. They were brought into discouragement, and he came forth and showed them that they might attain this life by living according to the manifestation of God's will, subjecting themselves to his commands, depending upon his power, and in this way living a life of righteousness. It is by his blessed example that we must be judged, for he showed us the way of righteousness by his doctrine and testimony, and sealed it with his blood. Unless we follow this example, our case may be fatal. How many Babel-builders are there now in Christendom, erecting towers, the tops of which they intend shall reach to Heaven! But those who build by the letter are dead, for the letter always killeth, to the true life and righteousness of the gospel. In this tower they collect the best materials of earthly wisdom, like the sons of Noah who had brick for stone and slime

for mortar. So the Christian professors at the present day have the scriptures of truth, which are an effect, a record of that divine wisdom which is above all the knowledge and sciences of the earth; and with them they are building towers, the tops of which they intend shall reach to heaven. If we build a tower so as to serve a valuable purpose, we should go to God as our foundation. But what are we building with? Is it with the divine wisdom, or our own creaturely imaginations? How much better would it be to turn inward, and gather materials there for erecting that spiritual building which would be an everlasting covering to us in the storm! We live indeed in the enjoyment of all outward blessings, but what are our returns of gratitude? How can we manifest the gratitude we owe to the Lord, but by surrendering ourselves wholly to him! Take home with you therefore these reflections, and consider whether your love is fixed upon your Heavenly Father. We all have one supreme love, and that decides the will. If our greatest concern is to procure to ourselves a name, and praise, and popularity among men, we acknowledge that we do not love God, and that all our religion is to make gain of the profession of godliness.

A religion without godliness or righteousness is worse than none. Those who thus profess it are hypocrites, and those ~~are~~ better who profess nothing. They are in a more dangerous condition, even than those who are indifferent about it, and make no profession at all. Let such as have only the form of godliness, by a close investigation, search out their own hearts. Nothing is to be lost, and every thing to be gained by such an examination. Can we hope to deceive the Almighty? Can we, by forms and ceremonials, and by the vain fashions of a deceitful world, expect to elude his justice? Would to God that this might not be the case of one individual present! But it is fatally true that there are many, up and down, making great professions of religion, who have little of the fear or love of God. The doctrine which purifies the heart and directs the life unto salvation, produces a fear in the mind of wounding that which we love. We are always anxious so to mark our course as to retain the affections of a beloved object. God invites us to give up self—to come out from the world, and to place our vain desires on the altar of self-denial. The only way to become the sons of God, is to be led by the spirit of God. As we make him our God, we become his sons and daughters.

There is no other way of obtaining relationship to him. We must surrender our earthly delights, and if we do not, it is equivalent to attempting to take away his prerogative. We should not exercise a will independently of our Heavenly Father. A disposition to do so, is the spring of evil to our souls, and by it we are led to prefer our own will to the will of God. But the sacrifice must be first made, before we can attain unto righteousness. It is a hard saying that "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." What does it mean? It intends that unless ye take up the same spirit, and yield with the same submission to your Heavenly Father, thereby partaking of the holy nature which enabled him to perfect the great work which he was sent to accomplish, ye have no life in you. The simile of an animal was made use of, as one animal finds sustenance by the flesh of another, partaking of the same nature, and obtaining nourishment therefrom. Let me therefore, tell you for your encouragement that if you counteract not the strivings of his spirit, and are willing to bow to his sceptre, you may become the children of God—the sons and daughters of the Most High. Blessed condition! I speak from experience what I have seen, and what my hands have

handled of the words of life—there is one thing needful, to wait for the rising of the true light, which in God's own time will beam upon you. For nothing but this righteous principle, which is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, can guide you to glory. It was this light which enabled Jesus Christ to become what he was. It is this light which enables us to fulfill the great end of our creation, to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.

But let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not imagine ourselves to be walking by the true light; when, at the same time, we are wallowing in our own pollution and filthiness. If we profess the gospel, let us proceed to the work, take off all our ornaments, and all the superfluities and vanities of the world. Let us do away our clothing, in a religious sense, and consider it as a burthen, even to think of the vain ornaments of pride. His hands will not spare, nor his eye pity, until the great work shall be done. Before we can come to experience the true light we must subdue our wills and vain imaginations and bring them into subjection unto God. We must strive after those feelings which animate and enable us to become the sons of God. For if we are children, then are we sons—and if sons, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Here the real Christian experiences the true fellowship of God—this is the earnest of his inheritance. He must arrive at this knowledge or what will become of his soul? It must sink into perdition, and lie down in sorrow. Let us, therefore, be up and a doing, and manifest ourselves to be a willing people. Then shall Christ be beautiful to us. Then shall we behold the King in his glory. Then shall we enjoy the happiness of the Heavenly state, and have full assurance of attaining that peace which consists in obedience to the will of God, and of that righteousness which shall give joy and rest forever and ever.

I have often been led to mourn over a weak and backsliding generation, and especially over our own sins. When we contrast the plain and unadorned simplicity of our fathers, with the dress and address of the present day, we have great cause of lamentation. We have become estranged from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. Prosperity in worldly concerns has hidden from us the light. It turns out in the providence of God, that the truth always prospers best under persecution. We have become so flourishing that we mingle with the pride of life, and

with the vanities of the world. The world wars with the spirit, of which young persons especially should beware. Many there are, I hope, in this assembly, who have received instruction from godly parents; and I would remind them of the law written on their own hearts; the covenant of life and love which God opens in the soul. Let them seek after the inward manifestation of the spirit at all times, in the house, at the fireside, and by the way. How great and important is the duty of parents! Every father and mother should rule over their own house. They should restrain their children from the paths of sin, and from partaking of the follies of the world. They are accountable for the indiscretions of their children, if they forbear to exercise that wholesome discipline which is necessary for their safety. I have had children, and I know it is a trial to constrain them. But it must be done, for the love of God constrains us to withdraw them from the vanities of the world. What can be nigher to our own souls than the souls of our children; and how much more anxious ought we to feel for their souls, than to adorn their mortal bodies! There is too great unconcernedness on this great subject among Christians, and among our own profession. I feel that I am near the closing peri-

od of my life; and I therefore exhort you that are to follow me, to turn to the Lord and seek redemption for yourselves. The day of my departure is at hand, and my earnest desire and prayer to God is, that the rising generation may be instructed in the love and fear of God. This only can shelter them from the storm, and enable them to build upon the rock of ages, against which, the gates of hell shall never prevail.

PRAYER.

Great and adorable God! who in thy unmeasurable loving-kindness hast manifested thyself to us in times past to the glory of thy holy name, be pleased to draw near to us at the present time, for we are sensible that we have no strength of our own. The work is thine, and the power is thine. Condescend to regard our weak and undone condition. Impress us with a sense of thy goodness and mercy. Revive in the minds of the aged and of the heads of families the things which refer to their own well-being, their duties to the world, and their duties to their tender offspring. Inspire the hearts of parents and children, and make them obedient to the wis-

dom of the just. May we all feel a deep humiliation and sorrow for our sins, and implore thy forgiveness on the bended knees of our minds, and wilt thou be pleased to have mercy upon the work of thy hands. May we feel desirous of living in thy fear, and of subjecting our wills to thine. Be near to the middle-aged—may they be strong men and women, united in counsel, and put shoulder to shoulder in the great work of reformation. Look down with an eye of pity and compassion on the children. Watch over all their ways, and guide them to the truth. Woo them unto the love of thee, so that they may become thy dear children, and as they grow up in life as men and women, that they may enlist under thy banner. May they take the armour proper for them—the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and be the means of spreading the great cause throughout the earth. May their hands be strengthened and their hearts purified, and made fit receptacles for thee to dwell in, and prepared for the enjoyment of thee forever and ever.

How pleasant and beautiful it is to look over this great assembly and see the good order and

propriety of conduct which has been manifested by all who have attended this meeting. I am no sectarian, but hope that the spirit of God may abide with each one of you present. Let us keep our minds solemn when we depart, and in the feeling of that love which is stronger than death, I bid you all Farewell !

SERMON III.

DELIVERED BY EDWARD HICKS IN THE FRIENDS'
MEETING-HOUSE IN ROSE-STREET, NEW-YORK,
FIRST DAY MORNING, THE 15TH OF 5TH MONTH,
1825.

"Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees ! because ye build the tomb of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

"And say if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,

"Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?"

THIS testimony of our blessed Saviour has been brought to my mind at this meeting in a very impressive manner, and has led me, my friends, to the conclusion that we sustain a great loss in not sufficiently knowing ourselves.

"Know then thyself, enough for man to know."

If men and women had a sufficient knowledge of themselves, they would be more guarded and

watchful in their thoughts and actions. These Scribes and Pharisees no doubt believed that had they lived in the days of their fathers they would have acted differently. They abhorred the idea of being guilty of killing the prophets. They felt as Hazael did when he was told of the evil which he would do unto the children of Israel. Is thy servant a dog, he asked, that I should do this great thing? And yet we find that notwithstanding the reprobation with which he viewed the conduct that was ascribed to him, he fell into the snare and committed the same iniquities which had been predicted by the prophet of the Lord. Hence we see, my friends, that we stand in slippery places, that we are in a state of continual jeopardy, and need prayer and watchfulness to guard against it, every hour and every minute of our lives. God protects the meek, and if we are watchful and humble we may hope for his aid to turn us unto righteousness. The Scribes and Pharisees were persons of learning and eminence, and hence they were introduced into the highest and most respectable stations in the church. But ambition grew up, and they were gradually seduced by the temptations of the world. Their declension was imperceptible—for men grow bad, as well as good, gradually. They said if

we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. But they knew not their own hearts; for when the blessed Saviour came and opened to them his divine mission, accompanied with the clearest evidence of its heavenly character, their minds were darkened. They could not comprehend it, nor yield to it their belief. When they could not gainsay the manifestations of his light, nor controvert his miracles, they reasoned upon them and said that he casteth out devils by Belzebub the prince of devils. Notwithstanding the fulness of the law of God, which shone forth in him in so marvellous a manner, and notwithstanding the example of patience and long suffering by which he bore testimony to the truth and divinity of his mission, instead of producing a change in that people for the better, it made them worse. And such is always the result of instruction and preaching; if it does not produce the good effect intended, it is sure to produce the opposite. And how bitter and malignant was the spirit in which the Scribes and Pharisees opposed the manifestations of the divine mission of our blessed Saviour! And what was the cause of that Spirit? They were afraid of their popularity. They were apprehensive of the consequences of attempting to destroy our Saviour lest the

people should come forth in his favour. Not on the feast day, said they, lest there be a tumult among the people ; for they feared the people. It was the people only, and it is always the people that have kept them at bay. Mankind are the same now that they were formerly. We are constituted in the same manner. We are endowed with the same gifts, and possessed of the same propensities and passions. We are subject now as formerly, to one of two spirits ; for if we are not under the influence of the humbling power of God, we shall be under the influence of a spirit of evil. The same principle of action will govern us that influenced the Scribes and Pharisees—and so it will be to the end of the world. It requires the same divine power in these as in former days to bring about a change in the heart, and to enable a rational soul to glorify his Creator. Man was created in the image of God, and he is possessed of the capacity to know, and of the power to perform the divine will. It is to the soul that God imparts his influence, and not to the outward man. The immortal soul and not the body, is destined to that eternal life or death, which is incapable of change. Fixed as the eternal purposes of Heaven, it will go on in the path prescribed, and advance continually in its progress, through the

endless ages of eternity. These reflections are calculated to make humble, meek, and lowly every rational soul who has witnessed the advance of those who are actuated by an evil and wicked spirit in their progress to degradation. It was this malignant spirit which influenced Cain to murder his brother Abel; and to this we may trace all the wicked actions which we find on the records of history. No matter what the situation of life may be of him who indulges it, so far as such a spirit prevails, it shows that murder, assassination, and the long catalogue of crimes is in their hearts. murder is in the soul of that man or woman who has the bitterness of feeling towards others of which I have spoken. Although they may possess the *highest place in the Synagogue*—although they be surrounded with the world's comforts and enjoy its honours, yet if they cherish this wicked spirit they are no better than the children of the Devil. *Those who fill the highest stations in the Church are, often, of all others the most wicked,* and the most difficult to reach. Such was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees spoken of. They no doubt thought that *Jesus Christ was a dangerous Man. He introduced new doctrines calculated to overturn the settled order of things. His precepts were new and singular. Mo-*

ses they knew, and Jacob they knew, but who was he? They regarded him as one who was dangerous to them, and more especially as *his doctrines struck at the root of their traditions*. But they were hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigured their faces that they might appear unto men to fast.

And this brings into view another testimony, which is the great and false profession of those who have the form without the power of godliness. O that cursed propensity of man to pride and bitterness of spirit towards his fellow beings, which is nevertheless indulged under the profession of godliness! Bear with me, my friends, I feel different from what I did when I came into this house. I have entertained no feeling of bitterness towards any person, nor have I had any sentiments like the present on my mind for several weeks past. Yet I do not wish to distinguish myself from others. I wish to enter into the same search relative to my own heart, which I recommend to you—lest I also become a cast-away. And I call upon you, my friends, to assist me in this search, with supplication and prayer. It is deeply interesting to us all. But O the dreadful consequences which must ensue from pride and ambition! We are all prone to be led astray by them, even those who have been met

by the spirit of God. And what an awful thing it is for those to fall away and crucify Christ afresh, who have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall. *The Scribes and Pharisees thought in their persecution of Christ that they were only engaged in preserving their doctrine pure, and clean. They wished to keep what they considered a pure ministry, free from the innovations which our Saviour was about to introduce. They claimed an exclusive right thereto, and regarded the doctrines of Jesus as subversive of their established rights and principles. But they knew not themselves, and hence they were called serpents; a generation of vipers.*

But let us leave the days of the Scribes and Pharisees, and pass down the stream of time, and see how it was with the professors of Christianity about the second and third century. How was it in the times of the successors of the Apostles? Did they not do the same acts for which they condemned others. They said "had we been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." We would not have crucified the Son of God. But they became "witnesses unto themselves that they were children of them that killed the prophets," for they fell into the

same course of conduct with the Scribes and Pharisees, and became as serpents and vipers, who could with difficulty escape the damnation of hell. They excited wars, and tumults, and persecutions against all those who rose up to defend the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; some they threw into prison, and others were tortured and slain. They showed that they were of the same generation of vipers for when they got the secular power they denounced, as guilty of heresy, all who differed from them in opinion. Like causes under similar circumstances will always produce the like effects. The bitter persecuting spirit flew like wildfire, and the true church was compelled to flee into the wilderness. A remnant like the seven thousand in the days of Elijah yet bore testimony to the truth. And such has been the course of events in later ages. Every generation says, if we had lived in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

But leaving the night of the Apostacy, let us come down to the morning of the reformation. What was then the doctrine? *Those who doubted the infallibility of the possessors of ecclesiastical power were called heretics, and persecuted even unto strange cities.* Some of them sealed their testimony to the truth with their blood. But when

they in their turn attained the ascendancy, they came round and became persecutors. When they came into a state of ease and got into the possession of secular power they were ready to commence the same kind of persecution by which they had been oppressed. They reasoned in the same way as the Scribes and Pharisees. They said had *we* lived in the days of our fathers *we* would not have slain the prophets. Yet how was it with John Calvin, and how little did that talented man know himself! Influenced by a bitter and malignant enthusiasm, he laid hold on Michael Servetus, a Swedish physician and brought him to an untimely end, only because he differed from himself in opinion. Be not deceived, little children; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, and he that committeth sin is of the devil, and all the wickedness of the world has its source in that vortex of evil.

But let us pursue the subject farther. How was it with the early settlers of this continent? They were oppressed by the rigour of church government in their own country, and fled for an asylum to the wilderness. Here they found it. They doubtless reasoned like Calvin in the days of Servetus, and said if *they* had been in the days of their fathers they would not have been partakers of the blood of the prophets. Yet they had hardly become quieted in the possession of this

place of peace and rest, before they fell into the same errors of a persecuting spirit. Even the tender and delicate female who promulgated our doctrine in the eastern part of this country, after suffering various other indignities, was finally put to the ignominious death of the gallows. We who live in the nineteenth century, when we reflect on these things, are ready at once to condemn them. How easy it is for us to say, had I been an inhabitant of the town of Boston at that day, I would have had nothing to do with that bloody act. But have we fully searched our own hearts? have we ascertained by faithful examination that there is no root of bitterness in our souls, and that if we possessed the secular power we would not fall into the same steps with those who have gone before us. Let us beware that we do not fall into the same errors, and come under the influence of the same spirit. With all our plain reasonings that we would not have partaken of the guilt of our fathers; and although like the Scribes and Pharisees we should disfigure our faces to appear unto men to fast, yet unless we divest ourselves of their spirit, we shall become liable to their condemnation. Bear with me, my brethren, in the plainness of my speech. Let us search deep into our hearts, and not deceive ourselves.

It is one thing to profess, and another to possess. Like the Scribes and Pharisees we may think that we have been doing God service; but the test is, have we been divested of every thing that would be evil to a brother or sister. These are they who commit the unpardonable sin, when they profess to be actuated by the love, and to be guided by the precepts of Christ, and do nevertheless cherish the spirit of envy, malice, hatred, and persecution. Christ did not say ye shall be known as my disciples by your faith and opinions; but by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another. As this proposition is true, so vice versa, will the reverse of it be equally true, if ye hate one another, then are ye the children of the devil. By their fruits shall ye know them. I say again, be not deceived my dear little children, for this is a plain and simple doctrine, and cannot be misunderstood. It is by the works of kindness and brotherly love that ye have testimony of the spirit that is within you. And one of the highest evidences of that spirit of love is, that ye strive to reclaim a brother or sister from falling into error. They are equally near to the great Father of the universe with ourselves, and we shall manifest the spirit we are of, when we labour to bring them out of the horrible pit,

and out of the miry clay. I appeal to you my dear brethren and sisters, when you were met by the way and brought from the depths of humility thankfully to adore the God of your salvation, whether it was not the first impulse of your hearts, and a joyful relief to your kind souls to pray for them and their everlasting welfare. The language of your souls to God for them was, O, bring them back to thy holy hill. It is by thus going back to the days of our visitation, and comparing our feelings at that time with the present, that we are enabled to learn, in some measure, what spirit we are of. When we are truly influenced by the spirit of God we cannot indulge a spirit of persecution. The true Christian feeling will induce us, should a brother or sister fall into sin, to try to reclaim them in a spirit of meekness. Nor is it only from the commission of unlawful deeds that we should endeavour to restrain them. Iniquity may proceed from the mouth as well as the hands. That man or woman who bridleth not their tongues deceive their own heart, and their religion is ruin; and *those who in caucuses and parties inquire and speak evil of each other are liable to the epithet of serpents—ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell.* When our blessed Saviour called them serpents, we are not to understand

it in its literal and outward meaning as snakes, but it was used as an emblem to describe them by an apt figure, thereby to represent their true nature. The serpent is a sly, cunning and subtle animal—he creeps upon you unawares and has even the faculty of deceiving the little innocent birds. In like manner they of whom Christ speaks as serpents deceive those who place confidence in them. I repeat it therefore again—little children let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous; but he that committeth sin is of the devil. This is the doctrine, of the scriptures, and you will think of it for yourselves. The new testament I consider to be a great blessing. It is an invaluable treasure, as an outward and secondary rule, especially to youth, particularly that part of it which shows forth the example and precepts of our Saviour; and in it, those who are older may see and examine whether or not they follow after the pattern of the blessed Saviour of the world. It will show us what our condition really is, if we are honest, and bring our conduct to this test, and those who profess to love Christ and who act so inconsistently with their profession as to seek the destruction of a brother or sister in holy fellowship, may know that they come within the scripture meaning of

the term vipers. Think not that I am about to speak lightly of the scriptures—I esteem them highly, but I have no idea of putting the letter above the spirit. Nor do I believe that by sending the bible abroad among the nations of the earth that the cause of religion will be so much advanced as many seem to suppose. I do not believe that God will reject from his presence and favour six hundred millions of intelligent creatures, only because they have no knowledge of the bible. How illiberal and degrading it must be to think that he has left them without a witness! I dare not suppose that he has blessed me above myriads of other intelligent beings who have not the scriptures. All the creatures of his power are near and dear to him. I have no doubt that the scriptures are a blessed corroboration of the witness. They have thrown a stream of light where before there was great moral darkness;—but I have no doubt that there are thousands who are now under the influence and blessing of his adorable love who have never seen them. Peter bore memorable testimony to this as he broke forth when the Holy Ghost fell on the family of the centurion, and said “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is

accepted of him." His mind was illuminated by the light of God, and I hope his precept and example may be sealed with instruction on all our minds. May we all be under the influence of the fear of God! That fear will keep the heart pure and holy, and be a fountain of light to guard us from the power of death. How necessary is it in this large and populous city, which presents such great, and so many temptations, to keep a constant watch. I feel for the dear youth in this great city. I know their danger, and I also know that many labour under great discouragement. Some have seen stumbling blocks in the way, and have been ready to give up. But be not deceived. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. Now, even now, you may make a covenant with God. Some there are who seem to walk as though they were in a strange land. O that you may contemplate the ladder which leads to heaven! "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Hence you see that gradation—that glorious ascent, which reacheth to heaven. Upon

its summit you may be clothed as with a crown and diadem, and shall be sustained as with an army encompassing you about. The religion of Jesus Christ remains the same now as formerly. Let us therefore come to the excellent resolution of the prophet of old—"as for me and my house, they shall serve the Lord." O ye who are parents, and in a measure responsible for your families, be constrained to lead your children in the path which is pointed out, and to follow in this glorious way; say unto them follow me as I follow Christ.

But many are discouraged in their progress, and I do not marvel at it. It is a dreadful crisis. The spiritual Jerusalem seems to be invested on every side. We seem to be giving way to the same spirit which the Jews possessed at the siege of the outward Jerusalem. They contended with each other. They fell into divisions, and strifes, and factions, and it is computed that more were destroyed by their own hands than by the Roman army. It seems as if iniquity abounded, and great dissention prevailed. Let us therefore get down into a state of true humility and lean on the beloved of souls. If arraigned before earthly tribunals settle it in your minds not to fall into premeditation. He will give you his spirit, and enable you to walk

by his light—and O that you may be preserved from the snares that beset you! And may all come to the conclusion that to become the children of God, they must do his will and be humble. Nothing can manifest that we have arrived at this state but a disposition to do his will; for to do his will, is to do good. He that doeth righteousness is righteous. We shall be known by our fruits, for by this shall all men know that ye are of God if ye love one another. If we manifest a malignant, persecuting spirit, we shall show that we are the children of the devil. Let us bring our conditions to this test, lest we be landed on the shores of darkness, and the awful condemnation be applied to us.—“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell.”

I am fully persuaded that if there was less tattling and scribbling, and more praying, there would be more happiness among us. The spirit of bitterness and malignity is like the whirlwind, that threatens to carry us away in the tempest. But the Lord was not in the whirlwind. When Elijah fled into the wilderness, he came and sat down under a juniper-tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, it is

enough : now, O Lord, take away my life for I am not better than my fathers. But the angel touched him as he left and said, arise and eat. In like manner should we in the days of discouragement adopt the same spirit of humanity, and retire into the same places of solitude and quiet. Covering our faces as it were with a mantle so as to exclude all external light that we may come with more certainty to the light of truth, and hope that after the whirlwind shall have passed by, we may hear the still small voice. As we exercise this humility we shall become more liberal, and have less of the malignant, uncharitable spirit. Brothers and sisters I hope better things of you. I am thankful that a good seed has been sowed in this city. Nor do I believe it to be confined to one sect or society. It extends to all who worship God in the beauty of holiness. Although some may adore an image of metal, or a picture, yet if they are sincere in their worship, I believe they may have the principle of righteousness, and be blessed by God whom they worship in the form of the material image. Others there are who have great confidence in outward forms, and the ceremony of baptism ; whilst many more think it their duty to partake of the outward bread and wine. Yet I have no doubt that as many of them as do righteousness are righteous, and if

they worship the inward through the outward manifestation, in a spirit of sincerity, I could salute them as brothers and sisters, and unite with them and lead them on their way in the path to heaven. Paul said "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." So when we have increased in strength and arrived to the measure of the nature of the Christ, we shall all lay by these childish things and unite in that spirit of universal charity which beareth all things, endureth all things. There are many who are humbled under the representation of the sufferings of the cross, and I have seen little children, on reading that story in the bible of the sufferings of the precious Redeemer, weep and seem to receive the evidence of the outpourings of the spirit of God upon them. And let us contemplate the inward sufferings of our Saviour. Let us follow him in his agony in the garden. Let us follow him in the spirit, when he said, "Tarry ye here and watch with me," and prayed to his Father, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt. Such should be the spirit and temper of mind of all those who would enjoy the fellowship of the everlasting gospel. And I would not dare to lift my hand to harm

one of those who may walk by a different light. If they are faithful and sincere, they will grow from one degree of strength to another, until they all come, in the unity of faith, unto a perfect man. No marvel therefore that such sentiments prevail. I remember the time when I was first met with. I was weak—but as I advanced in spiritual life, I laid by childish things. Many doubtless believe unto righteousness from the sufferings of the outward spirit. The soul as well as the body is capable of great improvement, and as we advance in life we should progress towards the centre of everlasting rest and peace. Be faithful unto the Spirit. As you attend to it, you will be brought more and more under its guidance. We live in a day of great religious inquiry. I would by no means discourage you ; and although I have no controversy with my friends on these topics, yet I dare not presume to set up my own opinion as a standard for others. If by setting up an outward form or ceremony good can be produced, then obedience may be shown to it, and it will evince its charity by its fruits. But if it produces a kind of violent zeal and enthusiasm, like the whirlwind and the fire, and carries away the mind in scattered fragments, then may we know that it is not of God. God has nothing

to do with the deluded votaries of ambition. "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say unto him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? or thy work; He hath no hands?" Have your faces covered with the mantle of God's love, and all the reasonings of man shall not be able to confound you. You shall stand sure amid the confused noise of the battle of the warrior and garments rolled in blood. Be steadfast, therefore, and firm, for he that hath fear hath sorrow. Perfect love casteth out all fear. Be afraid only of thinking an evil thought, or doing an evil action. Go on in obedience to the will of God, and he shall preserve you forever from the snares of death.

SERMON IV.

DELIVERED BY EDWARD HICKS IN FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, HESTER-STREET, NEW-YORK; FIRST DAY AFTERNOON, THE 15TH OF FIFTH MONTH, 1825.

THE affecting and encouraging intimation of our blessed Saviour to the desponding soul has been very feelingly brought to my mind in my private exercises, since I came into this meeting in which he made use of language on this wise —“Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Come unto me is the language. This is the only place, and we can never find rest to our souls but by coming to Christ. The Apostle Paul in the course of his religious experience found that there remained a rest unto the people of God. And although many may suppose that the testimony respecting the condition where “the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest,” refers to a future state, yet I have no doubt that it may be experienced in a degree in the present. For the apostle says, “he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” Now what are we to understand

by this? Many think it will furnish an argument that this means the day of rest. But I believe that the apostle went deeper, and considered the rest to be the condition into which the soul of man should be brought. The soul of man was created in the image of God and must partake of his nature. It must be clothed with his attributes. Yet how difficult it is to be still! But we never can know by experience the rest spoken of, until we come to cease from our own works, as God did from his. It is stated in the scriptures of truth, that after creating the universe he rested on the seventh day, and from this many think the seventh part of time more holy and consecrated than the rest. The corporeal sense would think that on the seventh day the Creator sat down, as it were to rest, having ceased from creating. But the more rational soul will consider that He might have gone on, creating worlds forever, and never been tired. All God's children rest when they cease from their own works. Man, being created in the image of God, is a very active creature, and has been creating little worlds for his own glory. Have you not often witnessed with what activity their minds are employed, when engaged in this work? But this activity is injurious to the soul; for this it is which keeps us from the enjoyment of that peace which forms the rest of

the voracity of their doggish-spirit. Now therefore, brothers and sisters, let us look well to our state and condition. Let us see whether we are yet within the city. A confused spirit is going forth in the world. Our Saviour told us not to give that which is holy to dogs, for it would answer no valuable purpose. It would not satisfy their rage nor excite their kindness. Resist them not for it is better even to be turned out of the synagogue than to resist with violence. Follow after this pattern. He gave up—he made no contention. “I could pray to my Father, he said, and he should presently give me more than twelve legions of angels.” But he quietly submitted to the iniquity of their doggish spirit, and this lamb-like disposition on his part did more to exalt the glory of his kingdom than all the outward acts of his life. He had no idea of making resistance. He knew it was in his power to do so, but he yielded to the dispensations of his Heavenly Father. There is great danger of coming into contact with the dog-like spirit. The Scribes and Pharisees retained it to the last stage. They committed the unpardonable sin. Why? Because they knew better—they sinned against knowledge. They admitted to Nicodemus that none could do those mighty things which he wrought except they were sent from God. But darkness covered their minds.

They gathered into parties, and caucuses, and endeavoured to excite a political feeling about it. They said if we let him alone, the Romans will come and take away our name and nation. And what was the consequence? Their conduct brought about a more speedy ruin. Cast not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine. Here is another animal brought into view. It represents a state—a swinish state. Mark the character of the animal. He will greedily devour the fruit which comes down, but never looks up to the tree from which it descends. All its dispositions and propensities are sensual, grovelling, and governed by appetite. Conformable to this is the representation of scripture, where a great herd of swine were feeding on the mountain. Here our Saviour performed a great miracle in casting out the devil from the man who had his dwelling among the tombs, and whom no chains nor fetters could bind. When he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped him. And cried with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus the Son of the Most High God, I adjure thee by God that thou tormentest me not. And he asked him what is thy name? And he answered saying, my name is Legion for we are many. And the devils besought him saying

send us into the swine. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave, whereupon the unclean spirits entered the herd of swine who ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choked. And he that was possessed with the devil and had the legion was found sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind. Christ brought him to enjoy this very rest which I have spoken of. He broke the chain with which he was bound. How greatly did his case resemble that of those who are in a confused state, and bruise themselves, and are driven of the devil into the wilderness of the world. The spirits which came from him went into the herd of swine, and ran down into the lake. The parables of our Saviour incurred the anger of the Scribes and Pharisees. They understood the meaning of them, and they gnashed their teeth with rage. The Jews also, who had been wonderfully blessed, became so degraded as to be likened to swine, wherefore the Lord was about to call in the Gentiles. They were in a worse state than Legion. He obeyed the invitation, and came to Christ. He enjoyed his rest, and the evil spirit which came from him, went into the Jews. Hence they reasoned—He casts out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils; the swine ran down a steep place into the lake and were

choked. The Jews did the same and ran into the very jaws of ruin. Now let us compare this with our own condition. Mankind are much the same now that they ever have been, and are as much liable to the influence of evil spirits as Legion. Is there not something among us of the character and spirit of dogs as expressed in the scripture? Are there not now some who are pursuing their game, and pressing through every avenue to accomplish their ends? It has been so in all ages, and the same bitter spirit seems likely to continue. And how different is it from the charity and brotherly love recommended in the gospel! for though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity I am become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. If we have not that, our labour is in vain, and we crucify the Son of God afresh. Now therefore let us examine ourselves strictly and see if we are of that number who are swayed by a perverse and persecuting spirit. Let us see how far we are pursuing our enemy, and wherefore we are endeavouring to destroy the character of a brother or a sister. As far as we give way to believe, or carry evil reports, so far we partake of the spirit of dogs, and are unprepared to enjoy the rest of the people of God. Just so far as we are engaged in propa-

gating injurious reports, senseless and regardless of their truth or effect, feeling that provided we swim, no matter who sinks, we so far resemble the swine, and whilst we remain so, we shall continue on the barren mountains of empty profession, feeding on earth. Being of the earth earthy, we may know that we are going down a steep place, and shall speedily be choked. Such was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees who took part against our Saviour, and such will be the case of all those who cherish the same spirit in our day—they are going down into the lake—the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is a dreadful picture; but it is sure and certain that if we go on in the same path, from bad to worse, we shall experience that dreadful state, and descend to the bottomless pit. Look therefore, my brothers and sisters, and examine your state, and see what spirit ye are of. If you are convinced that you are in such a state, then cast it out, for Christ is as ready as ever to cast out devils. If we are ready to make or spread an evil report of our neighbour, then are we as much possessed of the devil as the man who dwelt among the tombs, and we must cast him out with the finger of God, which is the power of God. If we harbour an enmity against a brother or a sister,

or are pleased with their downfall, we are under the influence of an evil spirit. Let those who are directed thereby come to Christ, and they will find it so ordered that a kind and benevolent spirit, on the contrary, brings its own reward. We always look for reward to those for whom we labour. If we labour for Satan, we shall have Satan's recompense. Sometimes we possess abhorrence of the spirit I have spoken of—but alas! how often are we bound so strong that nothing but the power of God can cast it out. Are there any such within the sound of my voice? I believe there is. To such then I say, try to be quiet. Meet with Jesus your Saviour. He will make use of means, and what he commands thee to do, do it, no matter how great the cross. I lived, (said a good man whom I know,) by a neighbour who was at enmity with me. Sometimes I was off my guard, for he was rough and overbearing. One day at meeting it came into my mind to go and speak to my neighbour. Accordingly as soon as the meeting was out I went to him. He was indeed a rough man; but the Lord had prepared his heart. I found him in his barn threshing. A silence ensued as I approached him; his countenance was fallen. I commenced by telling him what had fallen upon my mind; that my heart had been much at

enmity with him, and that if I had done wrong I was sorry for it, and wished him to forgive me. The rough man was subdued in spirit and said, no, it is me that has injured you. I saw the feelings of his mind and took him by the hand, and ever since we have lived in peace as brethren. Go thou and do likewise, and thou shall find rest to thy tribulated soul. Come then, ye that are weary and heavy laden—cease from your own willings and runnings, and God shall do great things for you. Like Mary you shall hear the good things that come from his mouth. You shall wash his feet. Let us therefore press to this work of the high-calling, and be brought under the influence of the spirit of God. Then shall you find peace and rest to your souls. O ye dear young men, and women, for whose everlasting life and happiness I earnestly pray, would you dip your feet in oil—would you enjoy eternal piece to your souls, come to Christ. He is the Saviour who will give you rest. Now in the spring time of your days, cease from all the worldly cogitations of your minds. Go into a serious examination of the nature and condition of your own souls. The design and reward of virtue is that after passing a few years of conflict and trial, the soul shall be carried into realms of never-ending bliss, and inhabit the city of God, not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens. The only place where we can find quiet and peace is the New Jerusalem. Partaking of this spirit, we shall be enabled to glorify God on earth, and to enjoy him forever in the heavens.

I have often thought that if I could go back to the days of my youth, it would be a source of great comfort to me. I then passed much of my time in silence, and in the meetings of friends, where I made a covenant with God. His mercy to me has been great. He has placed his arm under me. I remember that in the days of deep tribulation, when ready to say that I should become a disgrace to my friends and society—in the depths of my humility—I saw my Heavenly Father, who opened the way before me, and wrought out my deliverance. The little strength I had left I was willing to devote to his service, and I was thankful for an increase of light. How have I travelled with you that are weary and heavy laden—you that find no rest to your souls. Some of you, who like the dove have left the ark of safety—O that you may know how to return to the place of rest! If you are rightly concerned you will not return empty, but will bring with you the Olive branch of peace. How descriptive is the dove of the state of youth and innocence! It takes to itself

the wings of the morning, light and active, and flies to the uttermost parts of the earth. But are there not some of you who find no rest for the sole of your foot? Some who are discouraged on account of seeing the corruptions and bloody persecutions of the dogs and swine of the world, who are going down the steep place. Come you away to Christ, of whom Noah was the antetype, and here find rest to your souls. If you go on and sin out the day of your visitation, where will you escape the deluge? Like the raven that was sent forth from the ark with the dove, you may go to and fro, but you can find no rest till the waters are assuaged. And why did not the raven return? Because it is carnivorous, and can live on the dead carcasses. Its appetite could be sated on the mangled victims of the deluge. How descriptive is this of the unredeemed and unregenerate state of those who are without the city!—of the dog—of the swine—and of the sorcerer who can live and flourish on torn reputations! They can feed on things that are dead:—but O that you might become subjects of the prince of eternal peace! I wish for your safety. I have felt deeply for the youth and for the professing disciples of Christ in this great and crowded city. Like the repentant prodigal I pray that you may all

be turning towards your Father's house. Come all ye that have taken the yoke of Christ upon you, and learn of him who was meek and lowly. Come to the rest which is prepared for the people of God. Here all things shall work together for good to your souls. God calls upon you—and when he calls he intends his call shall be obeyed. Come then, and know, and realize. The troubles you meet with will all be sanctified to your good. You will perceive that in this world you have no abiding place—no continuing city. You know that in this world you have tribulation. Christ rejoiced that he had overcome the world. Let us therefore unite together in the belief of the covenant. We have hitherto lived on husks and shells. The poor prodigal, when he looked towards his Father's house, was met with compassion and kindness, although he had spent his substance with harlots. And how many at the present day spend their substance with harlots, not merely in the sensual but in the spiritual meaning of the word. When harlot is spiritualized, it means cursed self; and how many of the professing children of God beg to have their substance imparted to them for this purpose! How many spend their precious substance on harlots, for it is spent on themselves! They have a

zeal which is not according to knowledge, and are puffed up with cursed self, which tends to keep it alive. It is this which seems to influence those who belong to the various Societies which we see at the present day. Not but that I believe there are many good men among them, but there are also those who adorn self with a robe of righteousness. The Pharisees were members of like societies, professing great good works, fasting often, and pretending to much benevolence. Yet all this may be done whilst spending their precious substance with harlots. The apostle says—Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. We may make a high and pompous profession of our religion, and yet the harlot self may be kept alive in our hearts, decked and adorned with Christ's jewels.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh by force. There is great activity in appearing to take a part in heaven. Nor is it peculiar to any religious society, and it is to be feared that there are some who in this may produce, as it were, a premature birth—a zeal without knowledge;—whereby they become worse than they were before. Here we see it to be the case with the Scribes and Pha-

risees. They were as zealous to make converts as the members of any society in the world. They encompassed sea and land to make a proselyte, and yet our Saviour told them that they made them two-fold more the children of hell than themselves. Their last state was worse than their first. O that those who hear me may see their true state before it is too late!—before it is beyond the reach of the adorable attribute of mercy! There are those who believe, and who yet have been living on husks and shells. Hast thou cast a longing eye, like the prodigal, towards thy Father's house? If so, thy Father stands ready to meet thee, although thou mayest yet be afar off. To you who are slaves of evil habits—do you feel a wish to return to the mansion of your Father? Do you not feel a wish to escape from the tyrant you serve—for he is in truth a hard master? Come then to Christ. Come with the prodigal. I will arise, said he, and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. Are there not many among you who are ready to adopt the same language, and say—Make me a hired servant? Seekest thou

great things? Seek them not. O the beauty of meekness and humility! Here is thy brother who was dead, and is alive again; who was lost, and is found. That the aged, who have experienced tribulation—who have been cast down—who are ready to say that their hands have become weak, and their knees feeble—that these may come to Christ, and to his rest, is truly the desire of my soul. You that have passed the summer's ardent strength—you that have passed the sober autumn, and are now fading into the frost and gloom of winter—Remember that there is a Spring which shall bloom with perpetual verdure. Come unto the Lord of the seasons, who shall place underneath you his everlasting arms and sustain you. I may never address you again, and my parting words are—Come unto Christ.

You that are in the middle walk of life—you that have the youth of the rising generation under your especial charge—to you I say, Come unto him who is able to qualify and direct you. He can take care of the shepherds and shepherdesses. You can never be qualified in your own strength for the great and important undertaking. Come then to Christ. Parents often attempt to cast out evil from their children, whilst under the influence of an evil

spirit themselves. But they should remember that a vindictive spirit will never do any good in the correction of their children. Love and live in the spirit of God. This will preserve order in your families. Take the example of Christ as your guide.

A great duty devolves upon the youth. Once more I invite them to come to Christ. Cease from that activity and vivacity which marks the thoughtless world. Come into a quiet and humble state. Seek the Lord in silence, and the Lord will keep you in happiness, and enable you to praise him, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

The precious time we have had, and the solemnity which is spread over this assembly may make it unnecessary to say more, but I cannot conclude without a few further remarks. I esteem it one of the greatest mercies and favours, that we have the opportunity of secret prayer; and I wish to hold forth a few words of encouragement. When we feel lost, in the wilderness of the world, our gracious Saviour finds us. He often speaks peace to our souls on the sleepless pillow. My peace, saith he, I leave unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Dear

brother or sister, art thou under discouragement? Christ now sends thee an invitation to come unto him. He is graciously disposed to make bare his arm for thy deliverance. Whilst anxious for many things, be not unmindful of the one thing needful. If any are in the predicament of striving with their own strength, they must cease from their own works before God will interfere. When they have submitted to his will, he will pluck their feet from the horrible pit and from the miry clay. May they be willing to part with every thing for God! We are too apt to rely on ourselves for help; but if we give way to God he will interpose and sustain us. Mary hath chosen the good part which can never be taken from her. May we follow her example! O blessed state! Come to this and you will witness of the glory and mercy of God. Sweet will be his voice, and bright his countenance to find you in his Holy City. Be not discouraged. A state of suffering may be your best school; for it is a state of instruction. God will bring you into that state, where Christ the Everlasting Shepherd shall lead you into green pastures, and give you rest at noon-day—that state of spiritual repose, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

SERMON V.*

DELIVERED BY ELIAS HICKS, IN FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, HESTER-STREET, NEW-YORK, ON FIRST DAY AFTERNOON THE 22ND OF FIFTH MONTH, 1825 ; BEING THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEARLY MEETING.

THE testimony of Jehovah, to his servant Moses, in giving the law and covenant to Israel, has been brought very instructively to my remembrance in this short sitting. It comprehends a good deal in a few expressions. "And the Almighty spake unto Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Here it is evident, that the Almighty magnified his own power, which was coeval with time self-existent, and above every thing but himself. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God!

* Taken in short hand by M. T. C. Gould.

This dignity the Almighty has supported through all ages of the world, and towards all the children of men, that they should never give glory to another, honour to another, nor praise to graven images. And the enlightened mind in viewing this figurative dispensation, beholds great beauty in it. It is indeed, as the apostle expressed it, glorious. For although shadows are merely considered only as the representation of better things to come, yet all these shadows consisted in substantial realities in natural things. Moses was called of the Lord and sent down into Egypt, for the great purpose which he effected there, in delivering Israel. God knew and his servant was had to know, that the Israelites would not believe on his own evidence, his own testimony: for you know, my friends, it is generally granted that no man can be a witness in his own cause. No single thing can be a witness, if it is not of something beside itself, or besides its own declaration. Even the scriptures can be no evidence of the faith, by which we believe them. There must be something else, to evidence the certainty or uncertainty of their testimony. Hence when Moses declared, in regard to the requisition which had been put upon him, that he should go down into Egypt to deliver Israel, the people would not

obey him, for they would not believe him. The Lord knew this very well, and was therefore ready to give him an evidence, or empower *him* to give an evidence, superior to the testimony of man. He therefore bade him to cast down his rod, and when he had cast it down, it became a serpent; and when he commanded him to put forth his hand and take it again, it became a rod in his hand; although the moment before, it had been a frightful serpent, so that Moses himself fled from it.

Moses still seemed doubting, and the Lord assured him, that if these miracles did not suffice, he would give him to work other miracles. Moses no doubt, was well aware, that his testimony to the people and to Pharaoh, would receive no credit from them, though given to them in the most positive manner, and so with the miracles wrought in the wilderness. They would not be credulous enough to believe any thing about their truth; and therefore when they came out of Egypt, he was to work these miracles in their sight, because they knew of no other miracles than those which were outward which could be evidenced by their external senses; by seeing the fact externally before them. These he did in their sight, and he wrought many mighty miracles in the land of Egypt, be-

fore Pharaoh would give up the people. Here we see the greatness, wisdom and power of God, by his condescending goodness, in all his manifestations and dealings with his people Israel, in their low and degraded state. They were sunk so low, that they were not able to rise high enough to have intercourse with their Creator, with the God of their salvation. They were afraid to come before his presence; they were just emerging from bondage and captivity. And we know my friends, the effects of servitude—there is no people on earth, who have a greater evidence, of the effects of oppression upon rational beings, than we have, in this land. We see how it has degraded our fellow creatures. Oppression it is said will make even a wise man mad.

But the Lord had a regard for Abraham, who was faithful before him, and to whom he had made a promise that he would do great things for his children. This promise he was willing to fulfil in everlasting mercy and kindness. Therefore he lead them in a way, suited to their low and ignorant state, he gave them a law covenant and a religion, which stood in outward things; and known only by their rational strength and understanding.

Every thing was expressed and pointed out, as though it had been addressed to one individual. He therefore addressed the people as one man, as one individual person. And we see the consistency of it when we discover, that the law given to Israel was exactly the same to every one. The people could not divide, they could not separate and fulfil the law, which was one and the same thing to every Israelite. Every part of it was the same to every one, and clear and plain to the external senses. There could be no doubt introduced; as all was given through the miraculous interposition of divine power. And whenever any of the prophets were raised up, if any thing farther was added by the revelation of God, it would not be believed, only as it was opened to them, by the interposition of his divine power through outward miracles. This was the highest evidence that ever could be given through an external medium. And although this was glorious in its day, yet when compared with the dispensation of the 'gospel, we see that it loses all its glory; because outward miracles are no evidence of the gospel dispensation;—for an inward and spiritual dispensation can never be understood by our external senses. It is also of

great moment, my friends to understand the figurative dispensation.

This dispensation was intended to lead the people gradually, from that darkened, low, ignorant, and debased state, up into a state and condition, sufficient for the receiving of a law inwardly, which was to be a divine manifestation to the soul;—it was to be something which the natural eye had never seen, nor the ear heard, and which could not be discovered by any external evidence. As soon as this was effected, the outward dispensation was to come to an end. Thus, when one single individual Israelite, a son of Abraham, was prepared by it for the introduction of the gospel dispensation, which was to succeed the law, we find that the law dispensation had come to its summit and end; for it had answered all its purpose. It had brought one individual into a situation to receive the law of the spirit of life.

Here we find it introduced immediately, by the direction of God Almighty, through the operation of his own spirit and power. Moses was sent of God. Jesus Christ, a son of Abraham, and of God, was sent as Moses was, commissioned to do the work of God, and to fulfil the law dispensation, not failing in any one part of

it. By this he received strength and wisdom to introduce the last blessed dispensation to the children of men. This Jesus Christ fully manifested, in his own plain, clear declarations, after he had fulfilled the law, and the righteousness of it, in all its institutes. And in the last particular, which was John's baptism, we discover, by the text, of the scriptures of truth, that the Holy Ghost descended upon him.

Now here we have an evidence that the Almighty was leading on his great purpose for which he sent his son into the world; who had no doubt the same ability, sense, and understanding that every true Israelite had, in respect to the law and covenant. All having a sufficiency, no doubt, given to fulfil the law in the same perfection that Jesus did. For had not this been the case, it could not have been required of them, neither could they have been condemned, for neglecting of it. God Almighty is just and equal in all his ways, and righteous in all his works, and cannot change, therefore, he never did, and never can require, of rational men and women, any thing but what he empowers them to perform, and in the perfection of it, according to his requisition.

We find that our first parents had a law gi-

ven to them in plain characters, and yet, as they brought no knowledge into the world with them, they had it all to acquire. This was a state, which, the sequel proves, was a probationary one. They were easily tempted away from the commands which the Almighty had given them; and this was from a desire, which the Almighty had impressed upon their minds, to seek after knowledge. For man being wholly dependent on God Almighty, would have made no attempt to seek after knowledge, had not the Lord impressed upon him this desire to seek it. So that the desire and propensity, to seek after knowledge, is a work of Almighty God, and man could not have fulfilled the end of his creation, unless he had these desires. We know that we have all a great many of these desires and propensities, and we could not do without one of them.

This is the ground of temptation, and this it is that constitutes our probationary state.

I conceive that every rational man and woman under heaven, if they rightly improve the gift of God, given unto them, may fulfil the design of their creation. We believe that God, in his infinite wisdom and power, has given a portion of his spirit to every one of his rational creatures to profit with. Agreeable to the

apostolic doctrine, he has left none without a witness for himself, and all who turn aside will be left without excuse.

Here our first parents fell, they miscarried in one instance; and we don't read that they ever did, but in this one instance: I trust that we have all read this history, and that we must all plead guilty; for we have exceeded our first parents ten thousand fold, by our transgressions and multiplied iniquities. This is not because we do not know, when we are doing wrong, but because we have a fleshly part that we want to gratify. The Apostle tells us how we are led away, and what it is that brings death and darkness upon us; and if we had not been thus told, every rational mind would have learned it in his own experience. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live."

Heranow is an evidence, that we all have a portion of that gift, which is the spirit of God; and that we may live by it, and walk by it. All our actions are to be regulated by it, and under its influence we must do all our works, if we would be acceptable in the divine sight; for men separated from the Almighty, can do no good thing; but every thing which is under the lead-

ng and guidance of the Creator is good. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as God is righteous," saith the apostle. And yet it is a truth what Paul says, if considered rightly, as many professors say that their best works are vain. If they are their own works, brought about in their own ability, they are sin. If men and women act in their own will, strength and ingenuity in what they learn from books and men, they are going in the face of Almighty God, rejecting him as their counsellor and friend, and hence it is all sin. But this is no argument to prove that the works of the children of men are not good when they as rational creatures through submission, having no will of their own, give themselves up as mere machines in his hands, to do what he commands them to do. Here every thing is done under his direction, and is not man's work, but the Lord's work and altogether right. Therefore under the law dispensation, though it was outward, every Israelite who came up to it, would be accepted of God, if they did it in obedience to God; surrendering up as far as he had opened the way and instructed them, they were acceptable in his sight. But they turned aside, and greatly deviated from the commandments of the law as the scriptures inform us. Whilst Moses and Joshua and the judges who outlived

them, were among them they served the Lord but they afterwards turned aside and made shipwreck of their faith.

Now we learn as rational creatures, that God spoke to the Israelites not only as such, but that he always addresses us as rational creatures. Were we not rational creatures, we could not understand ; for nothing is a recipient for the spirit of God, but the rational soul, and therefore we are always to understand him rationally; for this is according to the nature of things.

The Israelites who were faithful, were all accepted, but those who were unfaithful, felt their own condemnation and their own guilt which arose from a sense, that they had gone counter to the law. They knew it and if they had obeyed it, they never could have felt guilty. Nor can we, my friends, feel guilty but from a self-evident knowledge, that we have transgressed against the will of our creator: "for where there is no law there is no transgression."

Here now we see how the law led along and what a long time it was before one individual was found, sufficient to put an end to the necessity of that dispensation; to put an end to the law, to that outward dispensation, which did not make the comers thereunto perfect. Now as I observed, when Jesus went into the last ritual

which was John's watery baptism, he received an additional power. And he certainly must have needed it; for we cannot conclude that God ever communicated any thing superfluous, to man or any other creature; for if he did, man could do without it, but as God, he could not have dispensed any thing without profit. Therefore it was an intimation given to John, by which he should know who it was that was to baptize with the holy Ghost. It was him on whom he should see the spirit descending and remaining upon him. Now whether John received this knowledge, through his natural or internal eyes, I am willing to leave to the opinion of each individual. It is sufficient for us to believe, that he had an evidence, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Here now we find that having an additional power, he had also additional trials to encounter. He was now brought to see his wilderness state; he was brought to see the trials and temptations that awaited him, arising from the propensities of his human nature, for he stood in need of all things in the same manner as we do; to eat, to drink, and to seek knowledge. Now all this is self-evident, and all these propensities are the gift of God. Hence it is, through this medium, that our probationary state is constituted.

Now we are to guard all these propensities

like the trees of a garden. We are to dress them, to prune them, and to put them in proper arrangement and order, just as in a natural sense, the gardener should do. He will watch every plant, and break off every growing branch which may prove hurtful; and thus should we do, in order to effect the great end for which we were created.

Now I trust that this speaks to our senses clearly. We know very well what makes the drunkard;—it is the indulgence of a propensity to drink, and as we indulge in drink for the pleasure of drinking, we create sin. God made not death; but man found death, in the error of his ways, that is death to the soul. Because it is apparent, it had nothing to do with these bodies; for death to the body is not an evil, nor ever was it, to the children of men, but when it comes in the Lord's time, it is a blessing. But the death pronounced upon our first parents was a sore evil. It was the death of the immortal soul, from the life of God, and all in which its comfortable life consisted. Here now we must suppose, that Jesus was tempted as we are, if we believe the scriptures. And is it possible he could be tempted as we are, if he had not been like us in all things? The apostle declares that he was like us in all things, sin only excepted.

Now because sin was not the work of God.

and Jesus being faithful to his Heavenly Father, could not have sinned, he could not have died spiritually; nor do we learn that Enoch ever died, for we read in the record, that "he walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." But here now my people have transgressed; they have become dark and ignorant; "they have turned away from me the fountain of living water, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

This was the situation of the great body of the Israelites, when the Almighty sent Jesus Christ, as a deliverer for them, to introduce them into a better covenant state and condition, which was the last and blessed covenant of God to the children of men: the same covenant of light and life, which he made with our first parents, when placed in the Paradise of God, which was no particular local spot, but a state and condition of the soul, which was suitable to have communion with its Maker.

And what was it that cast them out of this blessed state? It was their presuming to know good and evil for themselves;—undertaking to know as God knows.

This was the flattering temptation: If they would consent to this temptation, their eyes were to be opened, and they were to become as gods,

knowing good and evil. The same desire has followed man in all ages; he is not willing to stand dependant on God Almighty, who opened a way which was easy and clear for every individual; God has not varied on his part, and had men improved the gifts he gave them, they might all have acted the same part that Jesus did. This was intended, in the creation, no doubt my friends.

We find that his trials were great. He is represented to us as being tempted by the Devil. But was it any thing but the propensities of our human nature, and the desires of an immortal soul? We are placed here with free agency, which nothing but God could ever endow his creatures with. Some may say, Why did he give man this liberty, seeing man would turn aside? We should not reason against God, as our finite senses cannot open it to us, unless his spirit reveals to us why it is so. If we were under the right exercise of the gift of God, the exercise of our rational powers, we should see that this free agency was the foundation of our probationary state; and that this was the most complete place and situation, which an infinite God could have placed man in. We have every reason to form this natural and rational supposition. As God had wisdom and power, to make man just

what he thought best to make him, surely he would exercise that power and wisdom, and place him in that situation, which would most surely effect the great and glorious end of his creation. Here he speaks to us only as rational creatures, and we must make use of our rational faculties. These are blessed benefits which he confers on us by the light of his own spirit. As reason is a dormant principle, without revelation, so when God is pleased to reveal things unto the immortal souls of the children of men, they are then seen rationally, and then reason has an opportunity to exercise its balancing and comparing principle in man; and therefore there is a two-fold revelation to man. We see an outward revelation, by the outward sun, which seems to be an image of God; because there is one sun, and only one, in the universe. All the other planetary bodies which appear to give light receive it from this only sun. There are many things which give some light, so God, in his dispensation, shines upon the children of men every where, and some of them he makes stars in the firmament of his power.

We are abundantly sensible that all the light in this system of the universe, is derived immediately from this outward sun. It is always one and the same thing; and will continue eternally

the same, while it has a being. Although it is emitting light and heat continually, yet it alters not, because it returns to the same ocean of light from which it came. It never changes. The light of the moon is self-evidently derived from the sun; for when any thing intervenes, there is a state of darkness; when the earth gets in between the sun and moon, an eclipse is produced. Just so it is, my friends, when the mind becomes sensual, it is like the moon in an eclipse; it is darkened, and cannot see any thing aright.

But to proceed a little, (as time will not permit me to enlarge,) to the more glorious dispensation.

How beautifully and how excellently Jesus Christ manifested his mission on earth, and when Moses was sent to do the commands of the Almighty, we see the gracious goodness of the Almighty towards him; when Moses permitted his temper a little to get up, and render him impatient as it were: (and it is marvellous that he was not rendered more so by the rebellion of the children of Israel.) When Moses was commanded to go and get water out of the rock, in the first instance, he was ordered to smite upon the rock; and when he smote the water gushed forth. And when Israel again murmured, the Lord commanded him to go and speak, but not to smite upon the rock: But here now, when

he reflected upon the hardness of their hearts, his impatience got a little up. And when he lead the people up, instead of speaking mildly, he showed a little selfishness, and to bring out water he smote the rock, "saying, hear now ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock. Although the Lord, to favour the people, caused the water to flow, still what an offence it was to the Almighty ; and how much more would he have instructed the Israelites, if he had proceeded to show them, that he did not always do the same way ; because they never could comprehend, till it was manifested to them, that speaking would have the same effect that striking would have. So we see that he shut himself out of the land, but I do not believe that he shut himself out of Heaven. Because all the rewards to that people, with respect to the law covenant, consisted in an outward land ; an outward, local Heaven, and the enjoyment of pleasurable things on earth. And it is a pitiable thing that there are an abundance of the professors of Christianity at the present day, who are looking forward to a local Heaven. What ignorance !

Heaven is every where, where God is. . It is his presence that makes Heaven ; and when the soul is prepared to meet him there is life : " In thy presence is fullness of joy ; at thy right hand

there are rivers of pleasure for evermore. Heaven is every where where God and his rational creatures are. It is not a local place by any means.

We read that Jesus gradually came up from his childhood ; and as the Scriptures inform us, he was not much distinguished till he was about thirty years of age, except on a particular occasion, when he was found talking with the doctors, when he had fallen among them. It seems that when his parents found him, his mother said unto him, Why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. He answered them and gave satisfaction in a good degree. He found occasion to plead for his Heavenly Father, against the Scribes and Pharisees ; and he excited their admiration. And we find it so, sometimes, in children at the present day ; they baffle all the wisdom that poor creatures can learn, by science and the strength of their own power.

But we read that he returned and became subject to his parents ; and that he grew in stature, and in favour with God and man, and the grace of God was upon him.

He had a measure of the grace of God, to direct him to the fulfilling of the Jewish covenant and law ; and when he had completed this, and

filled it up, from the divine requirements, he was prepared for a greater portion of Divine power.

He was now, by the pouring out of the power of God, swallowed up into the divinity of his Heavenly Father ; as every son must have the same nature, spirit and condition of his father. And what makes us so as to our religious birth ? The apostle tells us in plain terms, and it is evident to every one who knows any thing of the new birth. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God. Well then, we see, that every rational, obedient soul under heaven, is a son of God. But nothing else can answer to make them so, but being led by the spirit of God. All our natures are corrupt, through disobedience and transgression ; for the state of the child is an innocent state, as Jesus declared. There are some who say that even children are under condemnation, before they know any law. They who say so, fly immediately in the face of Jesus Christ and give him the lie. What did he say, when they brought a child unto him ? "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." He told them if they were not converted, and become as little children, they could not enter into the kingdom of

heaven. This is the place we all ought to be led to, by listening unto, complying with, and submitting to the spirit of God. It would lead us out by a path and travail from whence we started and lost our innocency; it would bring us back into an innocent state, in which we could begin like a child, without a knowledge of what is good or evil. This was the case with the son of God, if we believe the prophecy: "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good: For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." Here now it is that we see, how we are to go on. O that we might lay it up in our hearts, and that we may commence treading back our steps that we have gone astray. Let us take the matter into solid and serious consideration. The testimony of Jesus is as true and perfect as the law of God is perfect, to the converting of the soul; therefore we must come to know the child's state, as if dandled upon the knee of its parent or mother; that is to bring us to the truth. This divine light will open our understanding, and show us what we are, if we are attentive to its operation. Or we should in other words become as the meal, passive to its influence. Here, the heaven of the kingdom of God, a portion of his spirit,

which is given to every one of us, will begin the work in us. This portion of his spirit being given us to profit with, it will continue to operate, till it leavens the whole lump. Herein it was that Jesus became the son of God, through the life and power of God in him, which leavened him, into his own holy nature ; till he was swallowed up, into the divinity of his Heavenly Father. Having been faithful to the father in all things, his storehouse was opened to him ; because his Father could trust him with all his treasures. He knew that he would not embezzle or make a wrong use of these treasures ; but that he would wait to know his Father's will, before he would dispose of the things which were opened to his view.

Now, here is the full and complete divinity of Jesus Christ. From what Jesus himself said, he was not God ; “ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

Who will venture to contradict Jesus Christ in his faithful testimony. Here he shows the distinction. He placed himself where his Father had placed him, as a sent-offering. He did not say that he did any thing of himself ; even the times and the seasons were in the hands of the Father, and entirely at his disposal ; not even Jesus, nor the angels in heaven, were informed of

them. Now see what a beautiful analogy there is between the sayings of God Almighty, and his Son, in his works and words. When he spake unto Moses, he said, "the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee, a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Jesus was not at liberty to speak a single word, but as he first received it from his Heavenly Father. What a beautiful analogy is this, between the shadow and the substance; when Jesus acknowledges in his own testimony, in his own words, that he did nothing at all, but as he received power and command from his Heavenly Father. Now this is of great importance, my friends, to know that nothing can divine for us, that no external testimony can reach to our state at all, but as the mind is opened by the spirit, which is the same revelation that Jesus and the apostles had. There is nothing but the spirit which can teach us the Scriptures aright. Our external senses are not good evidence of their truth. This was the doctrine of our friend Robert Barclay, and the primitive friends. The Scriptures could be no evidence at all of *faith* in themselves. It must arise from some other testimony. This knowledge must come from the very spirit by which those Scriptures were written. Nothing else can do it: so that to come to a right under-

standing of what we read, we must first come to the spirit of God ; we must first surrender ourselves up to the internal teaching, to the leading of God, and then we shall experience the truth of the testimony of Christ. " And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." He will bring all things to your remembrance ; lead you into all truth ; and if into all truth, of course out of all error.

How beautifully Jesus distinguishes between this spirit, and what the disciples had been looking for. The latter was a veil between them and the spirit of God, as Moses had been. His law to the people was a veil, and is represented as a veil that shut them away from the Holy Place, where the law was deposited, under that dispensation. But here the law is deposited in the ark of the testimony, that is, in the soul of man, in his heart or inward parts. Now God's law was one in the outward dispensation ; and when delivered to his people, they were all put under the guidance of the same rule. The Almighty took them under his immediate care as children. He gave them a law suited to themselves.

But when we come to bring the figure up to the substance. Can a law be written to suit our various conditions ? No, my friends ; could it be

written upon a leaf as big as this globe, it could not contain sufficient to suit all our varied conditions. No, my friends, it is impossible that an external law can be written to suit the condition of every creature under heaven; so various are our states. In this great assembly, there can be scarcely two found alike; therefore the law could not suit them as the outward law suited every Israelite. So the law is written in every heart according to the necessity of the creature, in his particular condition. O the divine wisdom that is manifest, how beautifully does it accord; what beauty and glory is there in it. But when we come to see the glory of the new dispensation, the other loses all its glory. "For if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"

There is all this difference and distinction. If we believe the Scriptures, the law which is now to guide us, is an inward law, which can never be seen by the outward eyes, or heard by the outward ears. It is a law given to us by a still small voice, who is the teacher of his people. God Almighty is the teacher of his people now, as he was the teacher of our first parents. If they had never revolted, there would never have been

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any other mediator, than the law in their own hearts.

As that was a law unto them continually, so is it now; the way is open. God will enter our hearts and write his law upon the tablets of our souls, by which we can read them with self-evident certainty, and know him in all things. And when we deviate in the smallest degree, we feel condemnation and guilt for our transgressions. I know what I say.

Although we may have set out, with a good degree of sincerity, that we would do the right thing, in the sight of our adorable Creator, being shown the condition into which we have fallen by sin; and notwithstanding Christ has led the way for us, yet, after we have gone on in a considerable degree, we have plead for a little liberty; we have committed sin. O how merciful he has been to us, to watch over us, when we have gone in the way of evil.

Here, that the Creator is desirous to be faithful to all who repent, is fully shown forth by Jesus Christ, respecting the mercy of a good and gracious God. When he was asked how oft a brother should be forgiven, whether until seven times, he answered, not only until seven times, but until seventy times seven.

So it is with Almighty goodness. We have

often turned aside after we had set out in a good degree, in the right way, and through the power of temptations, have been turned aside and made to stumble. But I remember the proverb, that the horse which stumbles and falls not mends his pace. Many have experienced the truth of this. Though many have often turned aside, yet God has not forsaken them in his adorable mercy.

Yea, my poor soul has great cause to magnify his mercy. How oft have I sinned and repented, sinned and repented, sinned and repented; and yet a gracious God has continued with me, and followed me in the midst of his tender mercies. He is not willing that any should die in their sins, but that all should return, repent and live.

O, my friends, that I might make you feel me, as well as hear me. This is what is wanted;—then dont let sinners be discouraged; no, my dear friends, we must gather inward, for we cannot understand the Scriptures of truth, unless we come to the spirit, and are guided by the spirit of God.

And what will all these outward testimonies do for us? We find that they will do nothing; for thousands and tens of thousands profess to believe in them, and yet there is not one in a thousand who lives up to this doctrine; not one in a thousand, I say, who comes up to this doctrine; and it is because they trust in the letter

which killeth, and will not come to the spirit, which alone can give life to the soul. Therefore, my dearly beloved friends, I feel my spirit dipped into sympathy with some present, that they may, through the grace of God, be made sensible of their great backsliding. Dont be discouraged, my friends, but remember the testimony of the prophet. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Cease to do evil, learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, plead for the widow." We must become just before we can be Christians ; and when we come to be just, then "let us come and reason together, saith the Lord : Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land : But if ye refuse and rebel, destruction is your portion."

I want to encourage every one. I want that all should be encouraged, to lay hold on the hope set before us. Have you not given way to your carnal desires long enough ? Have you not become sin-sick ? I should suppose every sinner might say so, who is yet in a sinful state ; and that he might determine no longer to bear the sight of them, but plunge himself down into the very dust, with his

face to the footstool of the Lord of heaven and earth. And it may be he would make you wait, as he did me ; that he would enlighten your understanding, and so strengthen you, that you would cry out, Lord, spare not. This is the cry of the sin-sick soul ; and he is always ready to bow down, and to do every thing in his power to atone for his faults.

Here comes in the mercy of our adorable God, as set forth by the parable of Jesus, respecting a certain king who went formerly to examine and settle with his servants.

Let us take care, my friends, and consider what this parable means. Let us suppose it to be the King of Heaven settling with us sinners. We read that one servant owed ten thousand talents. This was a very great debt. Is there one sinner present whose transgressions exceed this debt ?

Here we see that the mercy of God is above all that the sinner can do, until he hardens himself.

Well now, in order to try him, to see if he was willing to do what he was able to do : "his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." This was to try him, and to see if he was willing to do all that he could do. Just so in a moral sense, when a man is plunged in debt, to the amount of thousands, more than he has to pay with, his creditors like to try him ;—they want him to be honest, to do the best

he can, to give up all he has honestly, and depend on their generosity to give him back a part, if they please.

But if a debtor is not willing to give all up, they do not forgive him so readily ; but when he comes out honestly, and sincerely, and gives all up, where is there a creditor so hard, that, when he sees he has done all he can, will not be willing to forgive him, upon a promise, that if he should ever be able, he will pay the whole debt. I ask, where is there a creditor who would not forgive such a debtor ? Well then, if we admire the mercy of the king, which Jesus compares to the Heavenly Father, in forgiving his debtor, how much more shall we admire the mercy of God, who stands always ready to forgive those who sin against him. He commanded that himself, wife and children should be sold, but the servant fell down at his feet and begged that he would have patience, and said that he would pay him all. He had compassion on the servant and forgave him the debt. But let us remember, there is a condition as well on our part, as on the Lord's part. This servant proved himself not a faithful servant ; for he found one of his debtors "who owed him a hundred pence ; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and

I will pay thee all." But what did he do? He brought the whole debt against him, and cast him into prison until he should pay it.

What excellent instruction is this to us, my friends: what adorable mercy was manifested by the king to his servant.

The prodigal also conveys an idea of a gracious God. He is certainly more merciful, ten thousand times more merciful, than man can be, as is shown by the parable of a man who had two sons. This, I believe, may be applied to the children of men. One son had gone out, after he had received his portion, and spent his living among harlots. The other son had staid at home and been dutiful in all things to his father. He never had turned aside or disobeyed him. This carries somewhat of the appearance to my mind, that this was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only faithful. In order to explain a little, and bring it to man's understanding: when the prodigal son set out to go to his father, he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion on him." This is like the moment when we put on a good resolution to return to the Lord: when we are yet a

great way from that righteousness that we ought to be in.

Here now the father, "when he saw him coming, ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him." He commanded the best robe to be put on him, and to kill the fatted calf;—so rejoiced was he, to find his son which was dead, but was then alive; which had been lost, but was found.

The elder brother looking at it and considering the great prodigality of the younger and the attention that was then paid him, seemed to murmur. He could not see why his father should thus deal out to him. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandments; and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might rejoice with my friends."

How excellent is the reply to this, my friends. "And the father said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me: and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, but is alive again; he was lost, but is found."

O may this example leave a deep instruction upon our minds; and may we endeavour to come to that good resolution, every one now present, rich and poor, young and old, who are in the way of the prodigal. I make no doubt at all there are many who are spending their portion among har-

lots, among other beloveds ;—those that they love more than their Heavenly Father.

I will appeal to *you*, my dear young friends, you young women, whom I love sincerely. I want you to consider ; are you not spending your portion in the various fashions of a degenerate and wicked world ? This is the same thing, probably, that the prodigal was guilty of. We know not what those harlots were, but they were those things which turned his attention from the God of his salvation.

Therefore be persuaded by an elder brother, who greatly desires your salvation ; be persuaded to turn in the days of your youth ; it is a time so acceptable and a time which will so well recommend you into the favour of your Heavenly Father.

O turn to God in the days of your youth. You have an excellent pattern in the history of Jesus Christ, who pointed out the way. His way is our way ; and it is a way of truth and life. No man can come to the Father, except by walking in the same way that he did.

There is no other way to glory ; and there never was any other way, but the path in which Jesus himself trod. Therefore the blessed comforter, the spirit of truth that has come now under the gospel dispensation, is completely sufficient

for all the transgressions of Israel and the children of men, if they only fulfil the testimony.

One of the Lord's servants has declared, that the gospel is preached to every creature under heaven. Some think it is not preached to any under heaven, except those who have the Bible. But the Bible never preached the gospel. It is nothing but the Comforter, the spirit of God, that preaches the gospel to the children of men. Because if that only is the gospel, which is bound up in the book, we must all be predestinarians; and all who have not the book, must be lost. This is a great and sorrowful error. But it is not likely, that the outward covenant made with Israel, would at this day, or at any other day, suit the condition of any other people, but those with whom it was made. God had power sufficient to give it unto all the children of men, at the same time; but it was not suitable for any other people. No doubt at all, that he gave an inward covenant law to all the nations of the earth, suited to their several states and conditions. And those who were faithful to this dispensation written on the heart, in every nation, kindred, tongue and people under Heaven are the Lord's people. To these salvation is preached. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; and nothing else is the gospel. Therefore the angels of God are preaching the gospel to every creature

under Heaven. I was ready to say, that it is very likely, that some who have never seen the *Bible* can more easily see and obey this gospel than those who have this book; because those who have it, are pinning their faith on the letter. They are superstitiously looking to the letter, which only kills when the spirit is not the guide and director.

But I want every one (for I am no sectarian) to believe, that God is no respecter of persons; and that in every nation, kindred, tongue and people under heaven, those who fear him and work righteousness, will be saved with an everlasting salvation: and that those, wherever they may be, will make up the multitude which John saw, clothed with white robes and singing allelujahs, thanksgiving and praise, to God and the Lamb, forever more.

And those who have never seen the Bible or heard of it, will they not rise up against us in the day of account?

There is no doubt, that among the thousands and millions of people on earth; a very great portion of the children of men are placed in this circumstance; the same as the Gentiles whom the Apostle makes mention of, and yet he said they had by nature the things contained in the law, for they were a law unto themselves. I have no doubt he alludes to the divine manifestation of God,

received by the people, of all the nations on earth; and which, if rightly attended to, is all-sufficient. It is so universal a thing, that he calls it a natural law;—it is natural to every rational creature under heaven. By this, the Gentiles, he said, would condemn those who have a law, but do not fulfil it. O that we might look at these things, my friends. It wants only an attentive survey.

And may we not find, by a close investigation, that Christendom is the most behind hand of any nation under the heaven. They fall the most short, in my opinion, of any people in fulfilling the law of God in the heart. They can now exclaim against the inhabitants of the earth, who have not adopted this outward law; and these outward testimonies, calling them heathens and despising them; when it is evident that many of them have a higher sense of the divine majesty than some of the professors of Christianity. It is said that many of them worship images. It is difficult to see which is the most image worship; *theirs*, or a great deal of the worship in Christendom.

What is an idol? Does it consist, necessarily, in something which can be seen only through the external senses? No. We may make a hundred idols in our imagination. If we admit into the imagination any thing which we make a god, it is just as much an image as Juggernaut. Any thing

which we form in the imagination, of what we may ever have seen, or can see, and adore or look up to, is as great a piece of idolatry, as ever was under the sun.

There are none clear of idolatry, but those who worship God Almighty as he declared himself. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." Let this motto ever rest upon our minds, to preserve us against idolatry of every kind.

SERMON VI.

DELIVERED BY ELIAS HICKS, IN FRIEND'S MEETING,
ROSE-STREET, NEW-YORK, ON FOURTH DAY MORNING,
THE 25TH OF FIFTH MONTH, 1825; DURING THE
YEARLY MEETING.

THE soul that is fixed on God, for support and confidence, while passing through this mortal state, is happy beyond any finite comprehension.

The longer I live, the more I witness the truth of this testimony. Were it not for our neglect of this, we might all come to witness it, my friends. If our minds were rightly fixed on God our Creator, we should be led to see with one formerly—
“I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

My mind has frequently been led to adore the mercy and abundant goodness of a gracious God, towards his rational creatures, who are the most noble part of his outward creation ; and to consider his wonderful goodness and condescension over all his works. He condescends to clothe the lily, and will not suffer a sparrow to fall to the ground without his notice and heavenly care.

The older I grow, my friends, through the adorable mercy of an all-wise and blessed God, the more I feel my mind led off from every thing that is mortal. All the delights, and all the realities of earthly things, have become to me, as it were nothing, when compared with the condition of those described by the great apostle formerly; and which I have no doubt will always be experienced, by every true child of God, and by every soul which is prepared to be an inhabitant of the kingdom of heaven; to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in all things to give thanks.

My mind has been led, during the short space of time that we have been together, to revert and look back at past ages, to remember the testimony of the wise and the good. Even to the time when the Almighty goodness seemed to begin the great work of reform among his rational creatures.

Paul testified of this in these words. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses; the law and the prophets even until John was sent; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." How beautiful this is experienced in the soul of the individual who is fixed on God, looking up to him for support and confidence, to direct him in all his ways. It affords great encouragement to us, my friends, to see the

love displayed in the opening of the dispensation of the outward covenant and law to ~~the~~ children of Abraham, who was the Lord's friend. Here was the beginning of the reformation from a state of darkness ; and in what beautiful succession it was carried on from Moses through the prophets, and up to the time of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt, that every succeeding prophet from Moses, had some new opening : for the Lord has never left man without a witness in his own soul ; yea, it is given to every rational creature. And to *this* he has graciously added outward helps. Man had so fallen away, so gone down into a state of separation from God and his light, as to disregard this witness for himself, the light and spirit of God in his soul. Their attention was fixed on something outward and external upon which they were building their hopes. In this low debased state, the Lord Almighty, through the goodness of his love, condescended to visit them, and meted out to them, a covenant and law suited to their darkened state ; and gradually, through the interposition of his power, has continued to call, to invite, and to lead every attentive mind ; not only by the intimations of his own blessed light and spirit, but also inspired his servants to call them out of darkness. He has pointed them to the light, and recommended them to turn to it,

as manifested by the spirit of God in their souls. I was brought to remember the testimony of the prophet formerly. How encouraging it is, to hear a description of what the Lord had done for his people, to whom I have referred ; but his mercies are over all his works ; he is now doing the same among all the nations of the earth, according to his own wisdom, and suited to their several conditions. What mercy, what goodness ! and here we see how he, through the influence of his holy spirit, continued to raise up one generation after another, and so to lead them on in advancement and reformation ; but still there was something needful to lead them back if possible to the place from whence they had turned away, and if possible to reconcile them to God their Creator. So through the dispensation of the outward law, they were gradually rising higher and higher, till they brought forth that great minister of the new dispensation, that prophet, whom he had told Moses he would raise up from among his brethren, like unto him, and put his words into his mouth ; “ and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” Here now we see that he pointed out a way ; and how evidently it comes home to our own experience, if we will put our trust in God our maker, for protection and confidence. Here now we see how Jesus Christ led and

pointed to the light within the spirit of truth; and pointed us away from all external helps. And here we see, how this light leads up to God, and God's way. Now to be led by it, is to become the sons and daughters of the great God. For, agreeable to the apostolic declaration, as many as are led by the spirit of God or this light, shall become the sons of God. O how excellent is his goodness and his condescending kindness. The thought has filled my mind, and led me to a grateful commemoration of these things, in the early part of this meeting; and I call your attention home to the one thing needful, for we cannot come at this knowledge any other way, than by surrendering up ourselves wholly, to know our Creator—to fix all our dependence on him, for every right information: because there is no other way known but the way which God has opened by the revelation of his own blessed spirit. All outward things can have only a tendency to lead up to this blessed light, which is placed in the soul of every rational creature under heaven.

John has given us a description of it by asserting, that it was this light, this spirit of truth, which was the only light of God Almighty in Jesus Christ, which made him what he was, and enabled him to do what he was sent to do. "In him was light and life, and the life was the light

of men ;” and this he declared was “ the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Now, my dear friends, do gather into this witness for God ; this inward light, which our primitive worthies called the attention of the people to. Jesus Christ preached to his disciples the same thing, and thus did the Creator become fully satisfied with him. And I say there never was any other way ; there cannot be a vestige of record found, which has attempted to show, that God has ever opened any other way to us. This will unite with our own experience, and with the experience of all the righteous, of every age of the world. Now this light is dispensed to every one of the rational creatures of the human family, and all who profess to believe in the Scriptures must acknowledge it.

God is light, and in every soul there is a measure and manifestation of it, for there is no other true light, as it regards the soul of man, which properly constitutes the man, than the spirit of God. These poor earthly tabernacles are but animals, they are mortal, and can never have an inheritance in any thing except upon this earth, because they are composed of it. When these tabernacles die, they centre back into their mother earth, and there sleep eternally. They know

nothing, and are not capable of committing either sin or good actions of themselves.

It is the immortal spirits of men only, my friends, that can unite with the spirit of God, and be born of him, and become his children. God is an immortal spirit, they came from him, and that same power calls them to come back to him again. He invites them to come into the marriage covenant with him and become ever his, at his command and disposal. Here now, the experience of all must come to know the truth of this declaration of the Scriptures.

I have no doubt, that thousands and tens of thousands, who never have seen the book called the Scriptures, will come to know it the same way as we now know it : because a great and wise parent uses means, by which all the rational family may know it. But the means by which he does it may be very different and various. We discover this, no doubt, at the present day, by our own observation and experience, as Paul did in his day. But I trust, my friends, that you remember reading what it is, whereby he shows that all will be brought to know God, directing them into this light, through the same medium as he did those, who had not an outward law, such as God made with Israel. They were led by their understanding in observing the outward creation.

From seeing such a stupendous work, they were brought and compelled to acknowledge that there is a great first cause, which must be the origin of all these things. Therefore they came to know him by consulting the things which he has made and placed before their view.

So we see, my friends, this is also the testimony of those in former ages, before they knew the Scriptures or any written testimony. Moses was a witness of these things, and Abraham; and these things were a clear evidence and index of a supreme power. It led them up and pointed them to it; and they felt it by the light in their own souls, and knew it to be above them and superior to them. It was a light that they could not hide from; It was an overseer which they could not deceive. Whenever they turned aside from this law placed in their hearts; from the decisions given them between right and wrong, they immediately felt convicted. The great things which they beheld, they knew that no external thing could have created. They felt that the world must have been created by some invisible power; and they felt this power to work in their souls, where they could not avoid knowing and feeling it. And such are its clear manifestations, that those who attended to it, had such evidence, that they were obliged

to believe in God ; to believe that he had placed a witness in their souls, and therefore when they turned aside, from what the light manifested to be the will of God, they felt guilt and condemnation.

Now see how beautifully this is set forth in the New Testament, when we look at the doctrines, precepts, commands and examples of Jesus. They all tend to bring our minds home to this light within ; to this power of God, which gives a knowledge of things, which nothing else can do.

All Jesus' miracles outwardly, could not do this. We have evidence of this from his own blessed testimony, when he thus addressed his disciples. " Whom do men say, that I the son of man am." They had different views upon the subject, because they made up their minds from their own conceptions. Some said John the Baptist, some Moses, or one of the prophets. They had a variety of opinions concerning him, and nothing external could bring them together, or unite them in one testimony but the revelation of God. Now when he put the question to his immediate followers, what was their answer ? Here the Lord Almighty by his inspiring grace in their minds, enabled Peter to give an answer correctly. He said, " Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God ;" (mind it, my friends,) Christ blessed him and said,

“Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, upon this rock will I build my church, not upon *thee*, for thou art a man, but upon this *revelation of my Heavenly Father* will I build my church. Upon the immediate revelation of his Heavenly Father did he look. O blessed instruction.

Well, we find that in all ages of the world, the children of God have built upon this sure foundation. Now, when Jesus Christ had fulfilled his office, and all the righteousness of the law, and all its testimonies by filial obedience to his Heavenly Father; how completely he was filled up with what the Father declared unto him. But he waited at all times to know the will of the Father. He did not do an act without having first received instruction from him. Now mind this, my friends; the example is worthy of continual attention. If Christ could not do any thing without his Father, by the aid of the Scripture, and his own ability as a son of Abraham, can we suppose it possible for any of us to come to God without the same blessed light, which dwelt in him. I therefore say, that no man or woman ever came to know God and walk in his path, and the way he has pointed out, but those who, like him, come first into obedience to the Father's will. We see

that Jesus recommends his followers to this as the only thing. And I am willing to acknowledge now, when I am old, that I have never found any thing that would keep me right, and keep me in the way of salvation, but this one thing. Many things which I have met with, may have pointed me to it, as Balaam was instructed by the dumb ass. I have often been instructed by inanimate things which have fell under my notice ; and from sudden observation of things, which struck to the witness for God in my heart and showed me that I was doing wrong.

I have never met any thing from my childhood to the present day, which would answer but this indwelling knowledge of God ; and for this reason, I know it to be a truth, which is not only self-evident, but which is constantly confirmed and rendered certain by my own experience.

No experience will ever be worth any thing to us, which is not our own experience, begotten through the influence of the blessed spirit of God.

Then my friends dont let us try to do without God in any thing ; for if we do, we shall be like our first parents—they tried to do without God—without obeying implicitly the divine commands. We have no right to look any where else, except to this spirit which was in Jesus, and which is in every rational individual under Heaven. He

would have us to draw into it, and be instructed by it.

You discover this great assembly is made up of a variety of different persons, who may all have different views in some things, but this doctrine must come home to every mind, no matter what former impressions may have been, or by what creeds they may have been bound; for every creed limits the holy one, if it is made by man.

The true christian can have none but that which is in himself, which is eternally sufficient for all the sons and daughters of men. You see, then, that this doctrine is not applied to any particular sect or profession of men and women on earth. It only says to them, that God is endeavouring by the witness placed within them, to gather them back to the foundation which he at first laid, when he placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden. This witness was placed in their breasts, when they were put into that Paradisiacal state, in which stood the tree of life; and was there ever a tree of life, which could be seen by the external eye? No. Nothing can be a tree of life but God Almighty himself; and he is invisible to every external sense.

I feel myself led by the grace of God to address this assembly as one individual. For as sure as the outward law was suited to every individual

Israelite alike, so now, is this divine law, which is written by the finger of God upon the tablets of our hearts, the same to every individual. It is to this divine law that I am endeavouring to call your attention as the one thing needful.

It was the testimony of one of old "by their fruits ye shall know them."

Now my friends, let us see the difference between Mary and Martha. We see that Martha loved the Lord, and that the Lord loved her, although she was greatly in a state of ignorance and darkness, when compared with her sister Mary. She was putting all her mind upon outward objects, and dwelling upon external things. She was no doubt endeavouring to gain his approbation, by serving him in external things, believing in the outward manifestation. She was altogether wrong, although she did it in love.

No doubt, among the varied professing Christians in the different nations on earth, some having one kind of images, and some another, some composed of outward things, and some created in the imagination; there may be, among all these kinds, some who, like Martha, love their master and are willing to serve him, according to their own understanding. These may be as active as any others, although their

mistake is as evident, as it was in that day; for Martha was engaged very industriously in preparing outward things, and though altogether mistaken, still she was trying to do a great deal for her Master. But we see Mary sitting at her Master's feet, conscious of her destitute condition.

O my dear friends, if we did but come inward to the spirit of truth, how we could read the scriptures. How beautifully are portrayed these shadows and figures, to point to the blessed principle, which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "Behold, my sister hath left me to serve alone, bid her therefore that she help me."

We see the same thing among the professors of Christianity;—they are zealously engaged in the bodily exercises and faculties of the natural man to do something for the service of God Almighty, and when they have done it, it will answer no other purpose than the service of Martha did, and although it may be accepted as hers was, still they must be reprov'd as she was. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." We must all come into the condition of Mary; and I have no doubt.

that when we get aright we shall come into the same condition. "Seest thou not, how she has left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Jesus knew her heart; and he saw also the excellent state and condition of Mary, who was in that passive and resigned state, comprehended in the parable of the meal and the leaven; and no doubt it was a great comfort to him, to meet with such followers.

O see, my friends, how we have all departed from the "one thing needful." We have been engaged about "many things" and endeavouring to serve God in our own way, not considering that there is but "one thing needful." Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Now can we want any more instruction on this point? No. If we turn inward as Mary did, we shall be brought into a state of humiliation as she was; for she had not learned any thing from without, but she was brought into humiliation by the evidence in her own soul. It was the spirit which revealed to her Jesus, the Messiah, who was prophesied of by the former prophets.

(Mary was instructed and brought into this

passive state, by an entire sense of her inability to do the least thing, or think one thought, or perform one good work; she centered down into a nothingness in which she might be taught the things of God. Therefore it shows the propriety of the expression that in emptiness there is fulness and in nothingness the enjoyment of all things."

We find that Jesus recommends all to this light. He had been engaged in fulfilling all the external righteousness of the law, by submitting to all its external evidence and testimony; and when he had thus gone through with it, he was raised higher and higher, by additional glory and light from his Heavenly Father; so as to begin and advance, the bringing in of the new covenant, which was to be comprehended in a law written in the heart, by the finger of God; according to the prophet Jeremiah, whose prophesy was largely expatiated on by the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. You know indeed the truth, that all who have gone forth under the guidance of the letter have been persecutors. You know the inemical operation of traditional religion, which depends upon the letter and outward commandments of God Almighty. Paul himself had learned a great and deep lesson upon this subject, when he

was a persecutor: for he was a zealous worshipper under the law, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and yet we see that he was quite off of his ground, and he became a persecutor. But he was brought to see the light;—he was detected by the light and spirit of truth in his own soul. That power, which met him on his way to Damascus, was an inward power and evidence. Here now he could testify unto the Gentiles without the aid of Jewish ordinances. He could assure them that by “grace” only “they were saved;” for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world.” So now we ought to read the scriptures under the enlivening influence of this blessed spirit, otherwise we shall pass upon them, without understanding them, or knowing what they say.

The grace of God hath appeared unto all men. This is confirmed by the testimony of the beloved John who says, the light and life which was in Jesus Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. This is the true light, the grace of God which bringeth salvation, and that hath appeared unto

all men and teaches us the way in which they built upon it.

If we will give ourselves up, wholly to its leading and direction, and become passive like the meal, it will also teach us, "that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly righteously, and Godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and Jesus Christ our Lord." See now how he distinguishes between God and the Son. Now this is what the inward light does, in every individual soul alike; and if attended to, it would gather all into that union and attentive adherence, which would enable us to experience the fulfilment of this declaration of Christ, when he had finished his office and was about to deliver all up to God, that as he and the Father are one, so would it make all his disciples one; "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

Every child of God has the full and complete nature, spirit, and may I not say the divinity of God Almighty; because there is nothing but divinity in God, and therefore if they are partakers of his divine nature, so far they are partakers of his divinity, according to the portion

which he is pleased to dispense : and he must dispense that portion which will make them likehimself. For his children are as much like their Almighty Father, as the children of the sons of men are like their fathers.

Now, my friends, what encouragement is set before us, what hope presents itself to our view. Herein we view the inability of God's creatures as men ; and here we behold the dignity, which he intended they should come to experience.

We are not made to please ourselves. Mind it my friends. I address you individually. We should not give way to the gratification of ourselves, with the pleasurable things of this world, which we see thousands around us running into, some in one thing and some in another. There are a thousand deviating paths from the right one, all tending to lead us astray. Some take delight in the things of the world and some in the vanities of the world.

Some rational creatures stoop so low, as to be delighted with what !! Why, with what comes from the poor worm ! Silk ! And yet how the poor creatures will reason, that there is no religion in clothing. And who ever said there was ? But is there nothing in it ? I think there is, because we know of no other animal than man that takes delight in clothing. We don't

even hear that the lily does, although it is declared that "Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." Yet men and women will pride themselves in attire. See the thousand ways, that they have to shape their garments.

Let me ask if this was to please God? No, not one moment did you think of dressing to please him. You were as distant from God in your souls, as the mole in the dark earth. It was altogether to gratify your own inclinations, like the mole under ground.

O how such things degrade us. I can remember my feelings upon the subject when I was quite young, and though in other things I might have been wrong, yet when I saw youth, who doted upon these vanities, O how it lowered them in my view—and notwithstanding I knew nothing of true religion, it was because it was so debasing to the human mind. I want us to begin at the right place, and not expect to get to Heaven in a moment. So long as we are groveling among these vain foolish things we never can be right; therefore if we ever get right we must begin with these little things. Notwithstanding there is no religion in clothing, still there is religion, in that which enables us to clothe in conformity to the will of God.

When we come into a proper state, all these vanities will become so odious to us, that we cannot look upon them, or bear them about us, they will be such a burthen to us. The moment we come to the truth in our own minds we shall see that these things degrade us and separate us from the love of God. These are the little harlots that are calling us away from God and his commandments. I don't want to be tedious. Many are priding themselves in their superior acquirements of worldly knowledge, they are studying to be accounted learned in the sciences of this world, which are just as trivial as the ribbons on the dear young women's heads; for nothing can have a greater tendency to exalt men, than for them to suppose they are more learned than others. Although I had not an opportunity of studying the sciences like some of my young companions, yet through the ability dispensed, I was endownd with a capacity to obtain it very soon, and to get above them, so that they frequently came to me, even those who were older than myself, to be instructed in some science, in the rudiments of learning. Here now I found something more necessary than my human nature to keep me from being proud. But when I came to be willing to surrender myself up; here I saw the folly and vanity of it. Yes truly,

it is one of the greatest follies in the world. There are others seeking to obtain an abundance of gold and silver which is no more worthy our attention than the ribbons upon the bonnets of the dear young women. It is too low to give any attention to whatever. I am not sure but it is worse than fine ribbons; for I believe it does more hurt; it oppresses the poor. I want the rich men to consider this; for although the rich may think they do not oppress the poor, yet great riches always make great poverty somewhere. The apostle must have seen this when he said "do not the rich oppress you?" The same causes will produce the same effects, in all ages of the world.

As the light and love of God, opens in my soul, I feel my mind drawn forth to every rational creature; and my soul prays in secret for their redemption, from every thing that prevents or hinders them, from surrendering every thing up to God. Remember that if God so clothe the grass which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven how much more will he clothe you.

Clothing is to the body a small matter. But there is another thing in which you pride yourselves, which is the frequent change of apparel. My dear young females, and beloved

sisters, what vanities you are taken up with. You want garments of various kinds, and take up, almost all your time in considering how to keep your things in order, and necessarily have but little time, to seek God or learn his will towards you. And see the abundant labour of the body, that is exercised in gratifying this foolish delight.

In many ways these things do hurt. When the rich have an abundance, they get an abundance of clothing; and this excites a desire in the poor to be like them. Now consider the truth of what I have testified. The children of a poor father, think they have as good a right to dress as the rich and in the same profusion: they want to appear like them. The parents want to please their children; and the children beg to be clothed like the rich; they beg for this fine thing and that—they cannot keep company with their neighbours unless they dress like them. Here now the parent toils and labours and breaks his rest if he is an honest man, and goes on till at last perhaps he involves himself in debt and gives all up to poverty and distress. We see the oppression of riches; we see the dreadful effect on one hand; and the desire to gain them on the other, at the present day. My soul is often led to contemplate upon these things. I can

look back and remember, when a man was considered in good circumstances, with an estate; and now the household furniture of many would cost more than all he possessed. O what vanity, what superfluity, what inconsistency.

Can God be pleased with these things? Don't you see that it creates ten fold more labour than is necessary for us, by which we are lead to oppress our poor fellow creatures? As it was formerly with the Israelites when under bondage, under Pharaoh's yoke they were compelled to make brick to raise up pyramids for his glory, which could be of no use to him, to the makers of them, nor to any body else.

It is the prayer of my soul, fervently, at this time, that we may be often led, to look forward to the end of our stewardship on earth; and I hope I shall not fall short of declaring the whole counsel of God as it is opened to' my mind. I feel it powerfully upon my mind, to state the whole. For I declare in the presence of God, that I love every one. My love for my fellow creatures is so great, that I cannot do too much for them. I could even put my hand under their feet; I could wash and kiss their feet. Yea I could do it for the meanest creature on earth. O may we all gather to this love and light. As God is love, so he is light and he has

dispensed of it to every one of us, and it never failed any who put their trust in it; and if they followed its dictates they became regenerated and of course the children of God. He became my God: O blessed be his name. I intreat of you, I beg of you, I address you in the name of a merciful God and pray that you will consider these things, according to your several situations and conditions. It will apply to every one of us. This witness for God will carry my language home to them, who in their reasoning, might not understand it without gathering to this divine light. I will do all I can for you, with the best of my love; but I can do no other than Jesus did, than his disciples did, and the prophets. I consider myself a little one, not worthy to be called a disciple; for the time has been, when I looked upon myself as the greatest of sinners. I can do no more than to point you to the light; to that principle within you, and can tell you where to find the means, and it is because I know it. I am not led to preach things which I do not know, but such things as my spiritual eyes have seen, my ears have heard, and my hands handled, of the good word of life. I declare unto you that I have an evidence and that I testify unto you nothing, of which I have not an evidence.

Truth-T

I dare not speak at random, otherwise I should show that I departed from God's illuminating spirit: therefore let these things sink deep into your souls. I recommend you to the grace of God; and as you attend to it; you will love to obey it, and you will experience Paul's testimony, "that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world."

The Gentiles who had not the law, did by nature the things contained in the law which shows the work of the law written in the heart, and if they had attended to it, they would have served God. But they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imagination: which is the unhappy lot of all unbelievers.

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